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Jeer...

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Jeer...

That
is
my
life !

Rajesh Doshi

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Jeev

a MEMORY of

Rita Doshi

by NARESH SHAH

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Dedicated to all



To whom Rita

Brought happiness,
Whose tears she wiped away,
Whose pain she eased,
For whom she showed affection.
To whom she cared,
For whom she worried,
To whom she gave protection and
To whom she devoted her service.



PREFACE

"Jeev" refers to the conscious element within a living being—the soul.

One who does not understand the living being, the non-living, or the relationship between both, how can they truly comprehend worldly, mundane happiness?

The Jeev is the same in terms of consciousness across all living beings, but self-purification varies. This is why living beings are spiritually divided into two categories: Siddha Jeev (the liberated soul) and Sansari Jeev (the worldly soul).

In this book, I wish to speak about my "Jeev."

હું ખરે તું ખરો, હું વિના તું નહી

હું રે હોઈશ નહી, લગી તું રે હશે

હું જતે તું ગયો અનિર્વાચી રહ્યો

હું વિના તું તને કોણ કહેશે ?

"Only because I truly exist, you exist! Without me, you cannot be! You will exist only as long as I exist! If I no longer exist, you too will cease to be and become ineffable. For who will name you if I cease to be?"

These words of Sri Narasimha Mehta, reflecting the perfection of intimacy with the Almighty Sri Krishna, resonate deeply with my 'Jeev' at this moment. Let me clarify what my 'Jeev' means. From time immemorial, the Gods, Demons, Gandharvas (class of minor deities who serve as divine musicians in Hindu Mythology), and men of the past have uttered the word 'Ardhangini'

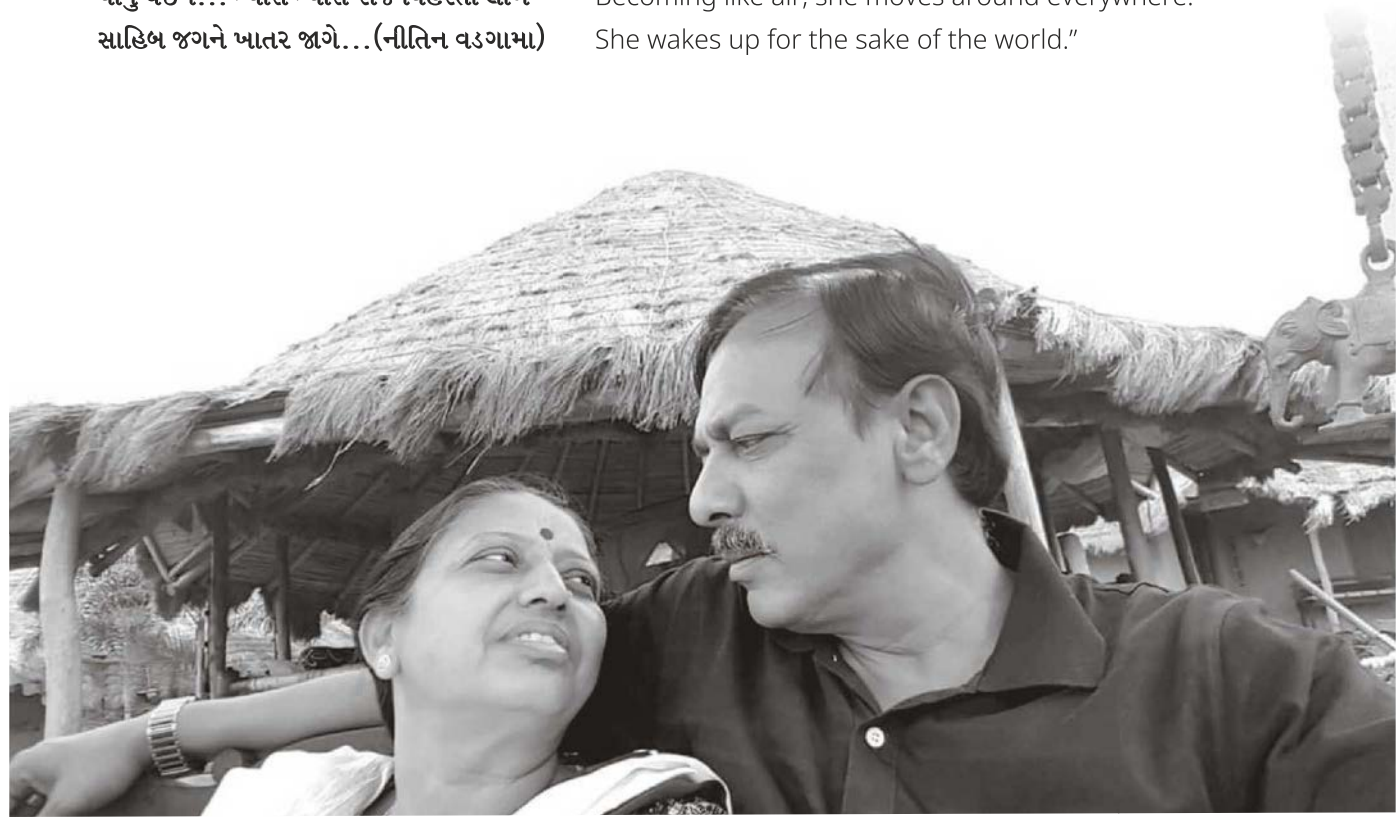
(better half). But my 'Jeev' is a 'Purnangini'—a complete being. This is my permanent address to her. It is an adjective, a sentiment, or love—however one may interpret it. Perhaps, in the past, a man would never have addressed his wife in such a way, for it is more than just an address. It signifies a transcendent relationship of my mind, emotions, and conscience. She is the one to whom my mind, intellect, emotions, and ego are devoted, in her presence and association. She transcends my life itself—my 'Ritudi,' my wife, my soul, my complete body—my 'Purnangini,' Rita."

Someone who transcends birth, death, sorrow, fear, etc. Therefore, although she exists in this world, at some stage, she proved to be a Siddha Jeev. The "Jeev" who gave up the body named 'Rita' became God and attained eternal purity, becoming a free soul, liberated from the living soul. Without any exaggeration, I have always felt that Rita embodied love, dedication, tolerance, sacrifice, and devotion. Service to her family was her highest calling, and she considered it her purpose to sacrifice herself like an incense stick, spreading her essence among her family, friends, and community—taking great pride in doing so.

Rita means such a personality who embodies the ethereal woman sitting on the crux, cemetery, summit, and throne. She is the Lady of power, wealth, and wisdom. Rita is a combination of love, social customs, and emotions.

પરમારથને પંથ, પંડનું પોત પીગળી જાતું,
કોઈ આંખમાં આથમતું આસું એને વંચાતું
વાયુ થઈને... શ્વાસે શ્વાસે રોજ વિહરતા લાગે
સાહિબ જગને ખાતર જાગે...(નીતિન વડગામા)

"On the path of selflessness, devoting her,
She could even read the hidden tears of someone.
Becoming like air, she moves around everywhere.
She wakes up for the sake of the world."



1. *"On the path of selflessness, devoting herself": This suggests that Rita was committed to a selfless life, placing the needs and well-being of others above her own.*
2. *"Even she could read the hidden tears of someone": This line implies that Rita was deeply perceptive and empathetic, able to understand and feel the emotional pain of others even when not expressed openly.*
3. *"Becoming like air, she moves around everywhere": This metaphor compares Rita to air, implying that she was ever-present and free from boundaries, always available to help those in need.*
4. *"She wakes up for the sake of the world": This indicates that her purpose in life was to make a positive impact on the world. She woke up each day motivated by a sense of duty and responsibility to others.*

As if she did not care about her rights, her only aim was to perform her duties excellently! Her time, strength, words, and support to family and children were devoted to such an extent that even today, every physical object in the house resonates with her presence. Her words echo in each corner, as she poured her life into every aspect of the home. The house speaks on behalf of Rita, who took care of both the household and the farm. In the social and educational spheres, her ability to impart a values-based life to her children was the epitome of "Nari Tu Narayani." (O woman, you are divine, A reflection of the Goddess, sublime.) She lived an inspiring life with grace, maintaining her dignity and self-respect.

The journey with 'Jeev,' which began in March 1982 with the first hypnotic smile and disheveled hair, led to our wedding in November 1985. In between, we exchanged heartfelt letters, filled with discussions about correcting letters, addresses, and caring for health in the midst of everyday life!

Amid the cloud of sadness surrounding the unexpected loss of Rita's elder sister and my elder "sister-in-law," the young man and woman of 20x40 and 24x48 were united in marriage on November 29, 1985, without much exuberance. A 24-year-old, 48 kg young man and a 20-year-old, 40 kg young woman!

Although the atmosphere lacked excitement, the ceremony proceeded with enough practical enthusiasm. Ten people traveled in two Ambassador Cars from Manavadar to Bagasara as part of the wedding procession, and 11 returned.

I was busy until the day before the wedding. Even after marriage, the busyness continued. But within a few days, Rita took over the responsibilities of the kitchen and the little Khushboo so effortlessly that, from the depths of my heart, only one word came to mind for Rita: "Purnangini," my complete woman. That is why I say that my "Jeev" is a "Purnangini." It is my eternal address, adjective, attitude, and love because it is not just an address. It is the enlightenment of my mind, soul, and heart.

Two years into our marriage, Rita became pregnant. We both worried because Khushboo was still so young. A thread of love and understanding wove between us, and we decided that we wouldn't want another child until Khushboo was six. We mutually agreed on this,

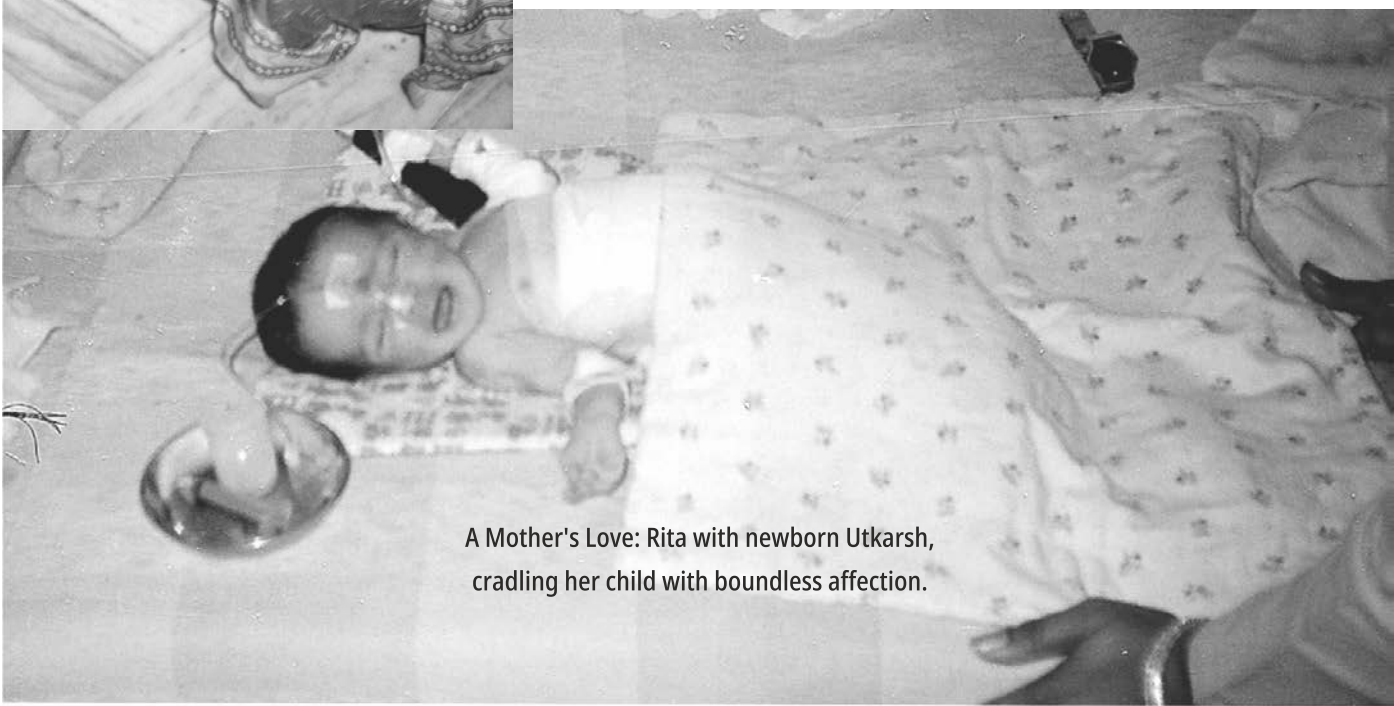
and, with medical help, we lost the baby without informing anyone.

On November 25, 1988, the gynecologist declared that Rita would need a caesarean for her first delivery, but I was adamant that Rita should experience complete motherhood. I told the doctor that we would wait for a normal delivery, whatever the outcome. An hour and a half after drinking the smoothie of 'Asheliyo' (*Lepidium sativum*), at half-past two in the afternoon, she gave birth to Kruti, a portrait of Rita. Then, on February 28, 1992, Karishma and Utkarsh were born, followed by a third child, born on July 24, 1995. These three daughters and three sons from three brothers became part of the Doshi family. These six children brought immense joy to the family.



On July 24, 1995, when Rita was admitted to a family doctor in Junagadh for delivery, Dr. Rajesh Doshi suggested that a caesarean would be necessary since the baby's position was not right. I told the doctor I would be present in the operation theater, and only then would we proceed with the caesarean. The doctor agreed, and the procedure began. The baby was horizontal. According to the pediatrician present at the time, Utkarsh had a physical defect. I immediately left for Rajkot to admit him to a pediatrician there. Rita stayed in Junagadh for six days due to her caesarean section, while Utkarsh was admitted to Rajkot hospital.

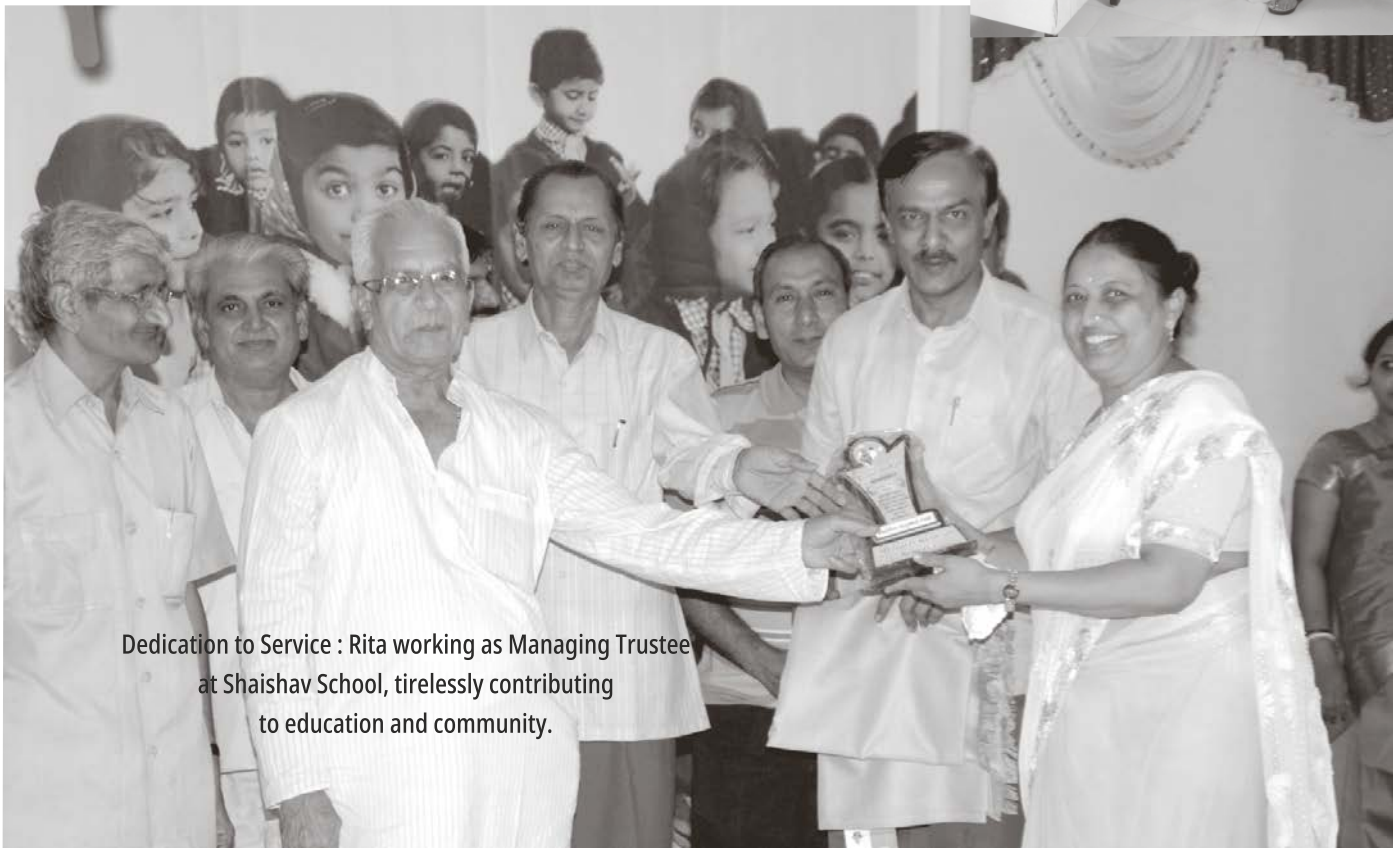
The physical defect Utkarsh had was directly related to age, and even after surgery, it persisted. By the time Utkarsh was eight months old, six surgeries had been performed. All



A Mother's Love: Rita with newborn Utkarsh, cradling her child with boundless affection.

members of the Doshi family were dedicated to his care. After the last major surgery, Rita's responsibilities grew immensely. For about fifteen years, from 1995 to 2011, she took care of Utkarsh. Only one in a thousand children with such a defect is completely free of it, and Utkarsh was fortunate to have a devoted mother like Rita, who helped him overcome it.

During these fifteen years, Rita and two aunts never wavered, visiting doctors every night, praying to gods and goddesses. Utkarsh's disability was so severe that he was unlikely to be admitted to any school, as children with such defects often cannot access education. However, due to Rita's unwavering determination, we started the English-medium "Shaishav Primary School" in Manavadar in 2000 for Utkarsh. In the first year, 120 children attended, including Utkarsh. He completed his education up to class 10 at Shaishav, just like other children, without any discrimination. If Utkarsh hadn't completed his homework, Rita would write a letter of apology to the school principal, and if he arrived late, he had to stand outside the class as punishment. After class 10, Utkarsh was admitted to a school in Rajkot, but Shaishav School continued to operate until 2020, managed by Rita for 20 years. The Doshi family spent 1 million - 1.2 million rupees annually to run the school, with more than 40% of the students receiving fee waivers. From 2000 to 2010, Rita, Utkarsh, and our maternal grandmother lived in Manavadar, while I traveled between Shaper Factory and Manavadar.



**Dedication to Service : Rita working as Managing Trustee
at Shaishav School, tirelessly contributing
to education and community.**

During this period, Rita effortlessly managed all necessary office work by phone while also managing the school. The children at Shaishav Primary School knew that if they didn't do their homework, they could expect a complaint from Rita. Despite her strictness, Rita was never angry with any child, though everyone—students and teachers alike—feared her presence. She would even scold teachers at times to ensure the quality of education was maintained at the school. Afraid of Rita, the teachers were scolded many times for their good teaching. Five hundred children were studying at the school, and all the children would address Rita as "Rita Bhabhi." At that time, Rita would laugh and say, "I have so many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law!"

I always felt that the bond between Rita, Nita, and Devyani went beyond that of sisters; there was such a deep understanding and affection between them. They took care of one another and continually tried to relieve each other of household duties. They would insist on each other taking compulsory rest during times of physical discomfort. The synergy between these three 'goddesses' was so strong that whether it was shopping or traveling, they always went together.

Rita had a particular fondness for dressing up—more so than the two older sisters-in-law. She enjoyed putting on makeup, wearing sarees and dresses with matching sandals, bangles, jewelry, and perfumes. She even encouraged me to wear colorful clothes. As much as possible, we coordinated our outfits in matching colors, attending events together in them. We often hear comments like, 'Look, there's such a lovely couple.' Many people were delighted to see our marriage, and some were even a little envious.

Along with her cooking skills, Rita's greatest virtue was her constant care for elderly women, small children, and her children's friends. Without giving her any time to prepare, if I called



A Leader's Commitment :
Rita in the office of Shaishav School,
a symbol of her hard work and dedication.



at mealtime and told her that eight people were coming to dine with me, she would respond with a smile: 'Come in twenty minutes.' And sure enough, she would serve us a beautiful and delicious meal. Such incidents have happened countless times throughout our married life, but Rita's taste in cooking and insistence on meals has never diminished.

There were six children between the three brothers, and their spouses. In total, there were twelve children and four nephews, even if a friend of any child came home during meal times or a guest arrived from outside, she never let anyone leave without eating. Rita, along with her two elder sisters-in-law, Nita and Devyani, continues to respect the traditions of the Doshi family. The joy of a disciplined joint family can only be seen when there is a sense of self-sacrifice toward each other, which is always present in a Doshi family!

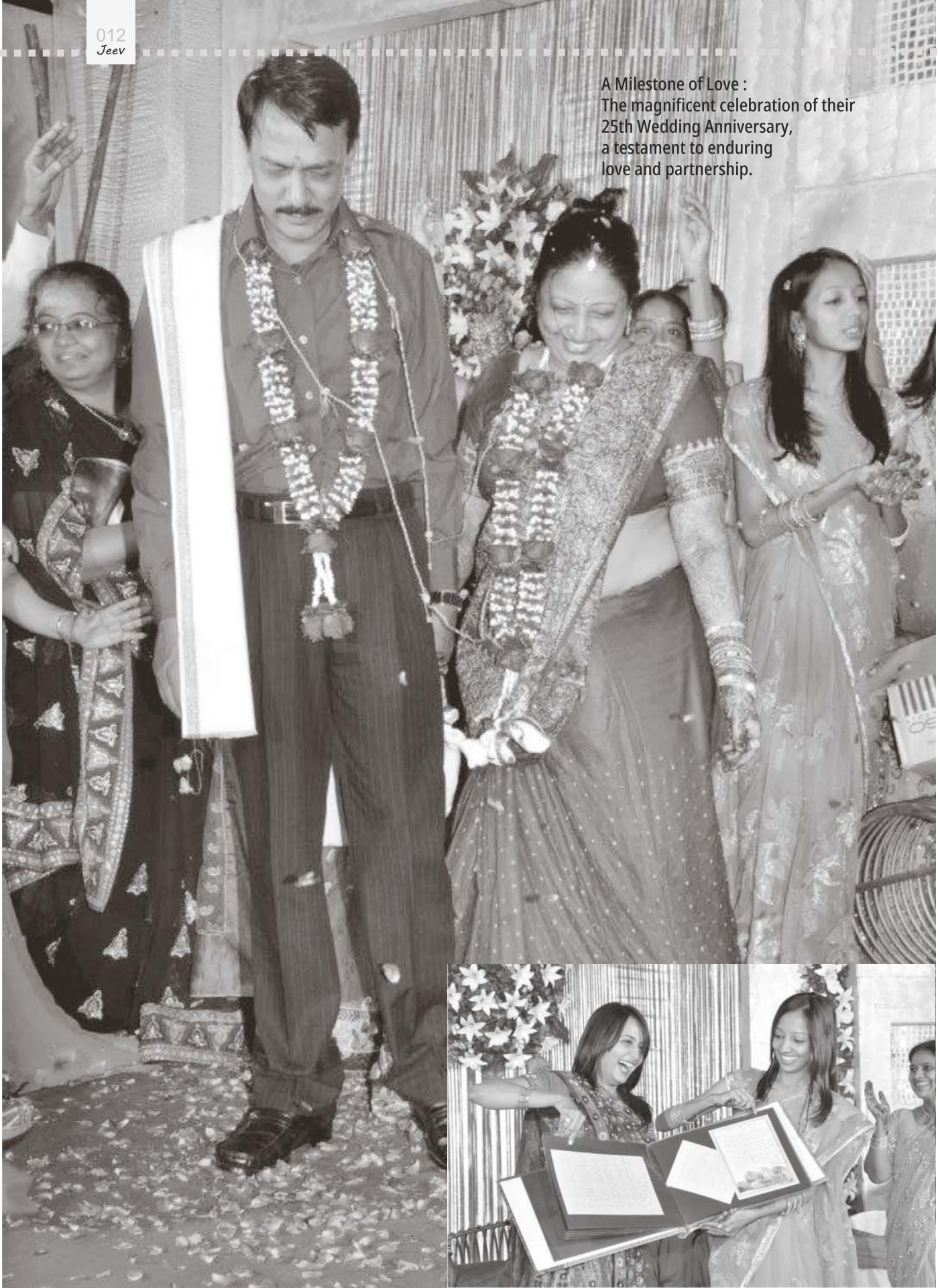
Amid all this busyness, on the occasion of Paryushan Parva (An important annual Jain observance, is a time for introspection, reflection, and purification) beginning on September 4, 2002, Rita fasted by drinking only boiled water. However, Rita, who was deeply religious, felt a strong urge to observe Atthai (no food for a continuous 8 days, only boiled water). Following Jain rituals, she fasted for nine days, consuming only boiled water. She completed her fast by eating food served by Jain saints.

In 2003, in response to an invitation from one of my friends, Viram Bhatu, Rita and my partner's wife, Mrs. Saguna, attended the "Bhagwat Saptah" (a seven-day period dedicated to the recitation and discourse of the "Shrimad Bhagwat Purana," a sacred Hindu text primarily focused on the stories of Lord Krishna). The Bhagwat Saptah took place at Viram Bhatu's wadi (Farmhouse), located behind Girnar (The name of a mountain range in the Junagadh district of Gujarat) after attending the Saptah, they returned home in the evening, and as soon as I reached Manavadar from Shapar, Rita said, "Rajbha, it would be wonderful if we had such a nice wadi." These words stuck in my mind, and in 2006, Rita and I decided to buy a 60-acre farm. I shared the good news with Rita.

Due to the habit and necessity of working eighteen hours a day from about 1981 to 2006 in business, it was rare to celebrate an anniversary or birthday. However, in our married life, the atmosphere of happiness never diminished, all because of Rita's understanding and dedication. I realized the difference between merely being alive and truly feeling alive. I wasn't just living; I felt alive. My "Jeev" was always with me, and that's why the idea arose after 2006 to live only with my "Jeev." Since then, whether in Germany, Italy, Taiwan, Jordan, or Turkey, whether for work or on special occasions, Rita was always with me. In my journey of life, starting with little Khushboo, different stages came one by one—home, kitchen, guests, children, family, Shaishav School, Rita's wadi, "Chandrashruti" old age homes—and my "Jeev" continued spreading everywhere.

When I look at such events from this perspective, I understand that I may not have fully grasped when, how, or how much this life expanded at the time. But from 2006 to 2022, fulfilling all

A Milestone of Love :
The magnificent celebration of their
25th Wedding Anniversary,
a testament to enduring
love and partnership.



of Rita's wishes has become a treasure and memory for my future life.

From acquiring the wadi in 2006 to making it beautiful, it was her dream, her awareness, and her effort. With her keen sense and elegance, she decorated the wadi with typical traditional items called Jujan Toran, Chakla, Dholia, carpets, and more. She turned the farm into a Gokul (place where Lord Krishna was raised), where guests would say, "Be my precious guest, and I will make you forget heaven!"

She had a helper named Jyotsana at the wadi. Jyotsana could only cook rotla (thick, flatbread made from millet flour) and khichdi (cuisine made of rice and lentils), but Rita was like Annapurna. She taught her complete Gujarati cooking with her wisdom and made her aware of the food preferences of all the Doshi family members. Even now, everyone praises and enjoys the food Jyotsana cooks, which Rita taught her. Since Rita loved swings, twelve different types of swings were placed at her wadi.

To make up for all the missed celebrations of birthdays and wedding anniversaries due to busy years, all our children came together to celebrate our 25th anniversary in grand style. Until 4:30 in the evening on November 29, 2010, neither Rita nor I had the slightest idea that our 25th anniversary had already been planned. The letters we exchanged between 1983 and 1987 were secretly gathered by the children and revealed at the "stage" decorated for the 25th anniversary. It wasn't until two or three beauticians arrived at the house for Rita's makeup and preparation at 4:30 that evening that we realized the anniversary was to be celebrated. What should we do? What was the plan? Neither of us knew anything. In 1985, our marriage was marked by simplicity and a rush of emotions, and all the excitement, exhilaration, and gaiety that had been missing were fulfilled in 2010, thanks to our children and elders.

A beautiful wedding card was sent to our relatives, and there was repeated insistence from the elder family members to personally invite all the guests. A party plot in Rajkot was decorated with our favorite color, red, for the wedding procedures called 'Hasta Melap' and 'Mangal Phera'. Even then, we didn't fully understand the extent of the preparations made by the children. Around 7 o'clock, a beautifully decorated red antique car came to pick us up and took both of us to the wedding venue.

As soon as we stepped into the party plot, we were overcome with joy and tears as we saw the arrangements made by the children. All our relatives, including childhood friends, had been invited, and they greeted us warmly. The special part was that, while giving out the invitations, the children insisted that neither I nor Rita should know about this celebration, and that's exactly how it unfolded. The children ceremoniously got us married and then sent us off to celebrate our wedding night like newlyweds at one of the nicest hotels in the city. On the occasion of this marriage, both my elder brothers gifted us a Skoda Superb car. Driving that Skoda, we headed to the hotel, and the joy on my Purnagini's face was such that it felt as though all

responsibilities had been fulfilled!

On 30 August 2014, Samvatsari Day (Annual day of Jain festival Paryushana), Rita, I, our neighbor Mahendra, and his wife went to visit the nearby Nageshwar Temple in Rajkot. On the way back, Rita looked at some Ganesha (prominent Hindu god of beginnings, wisdom and luck) idols on the roadside and said to me and Mahendra, "Rajbha, let's take Ganesha!"

Mahendra reminded us that the installation needed to be done the next day, and it was already 11 o'clock at night. Everyone calmed down for a while, but Rita was insistent. So, I said, "We will install the Ganesha idol tomorrow!"

After reaching home, we spoke to my elder brother and both sisters-in-law. With their consent, we called the mandap (stage) service provider and asked him to create a beautiful mandap, as we planned to do the 'Ganesh sthapana' (installation of the Ganesha idol) the next

Family Traditions : The Doshi family during the Ganesha festival, immersed in devotion and togetherness.

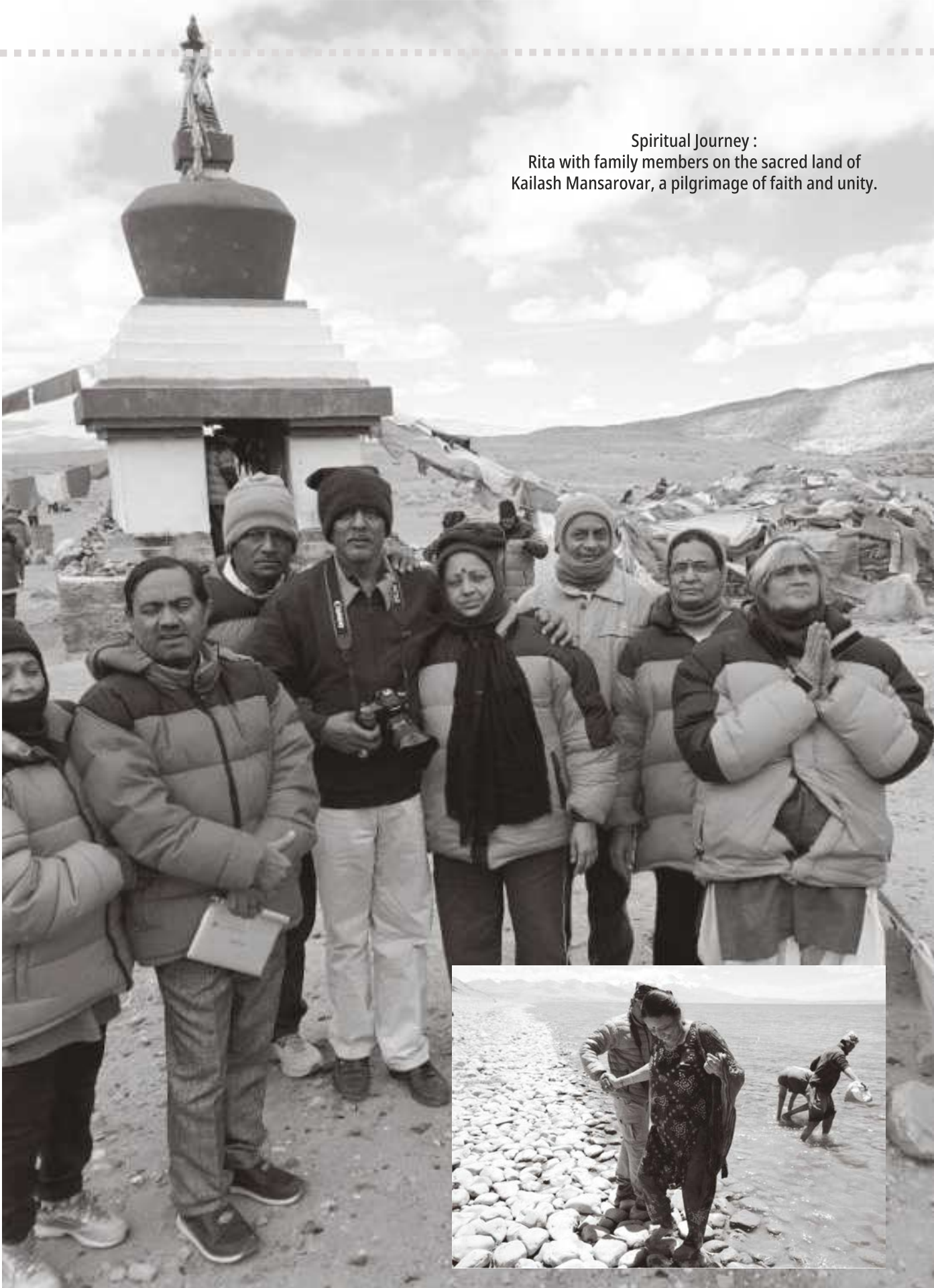


morning at 11 o'clock. The Mandap service man, Munna, enthusiastically agreed to help. At midnight, I left with Rita and sister-in-law to select the clay Ganesha idol. The next day, Ganesha was installed with great joy and a Garba program. The Doshi family named the Ganesha idol "Panchavati Ka Raja." Being a worshiper of Shiva since childhood, Rita had immense faith in Lord Shiva's son, Ganesha. During the eleven-day Ganesha festival, Rita hoped for good news regarding Khushboo, and she vowed that if she received good

news about Khushboo, she would bring Ganesha home for eleven consecutive years! Her wish was fulfilled, as Khushboo gave good news to the Doshi family in August 2015, and Kruti also shared good news at the same time. As promised, Rita began celebrating the Ganesh festival for eleven days every year in Panchvati society. Every day during the festival, as per Rita's wish, a Ladoo (Sweet) made from pure ghee (clarified butter) was offered as prasad.

In 2016, Rita insisted that we go to Kailash Mansarovar (sacred region in Tibet that includes home of lord Shiva, Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar). Since Mansarovar is located 6,600 meters above sea level, the air becomes thin, and breathing is difficult. Despite my reluctance, Rita's immense faith in Lord Shiva melted my heart. On 31st May 2016, Rita, I, Elder sister-in-law,

Spiritual Journey :
Rita with family members on the sacred land of
Kailash Mansarovar, a pilgrimage of faith and unity.



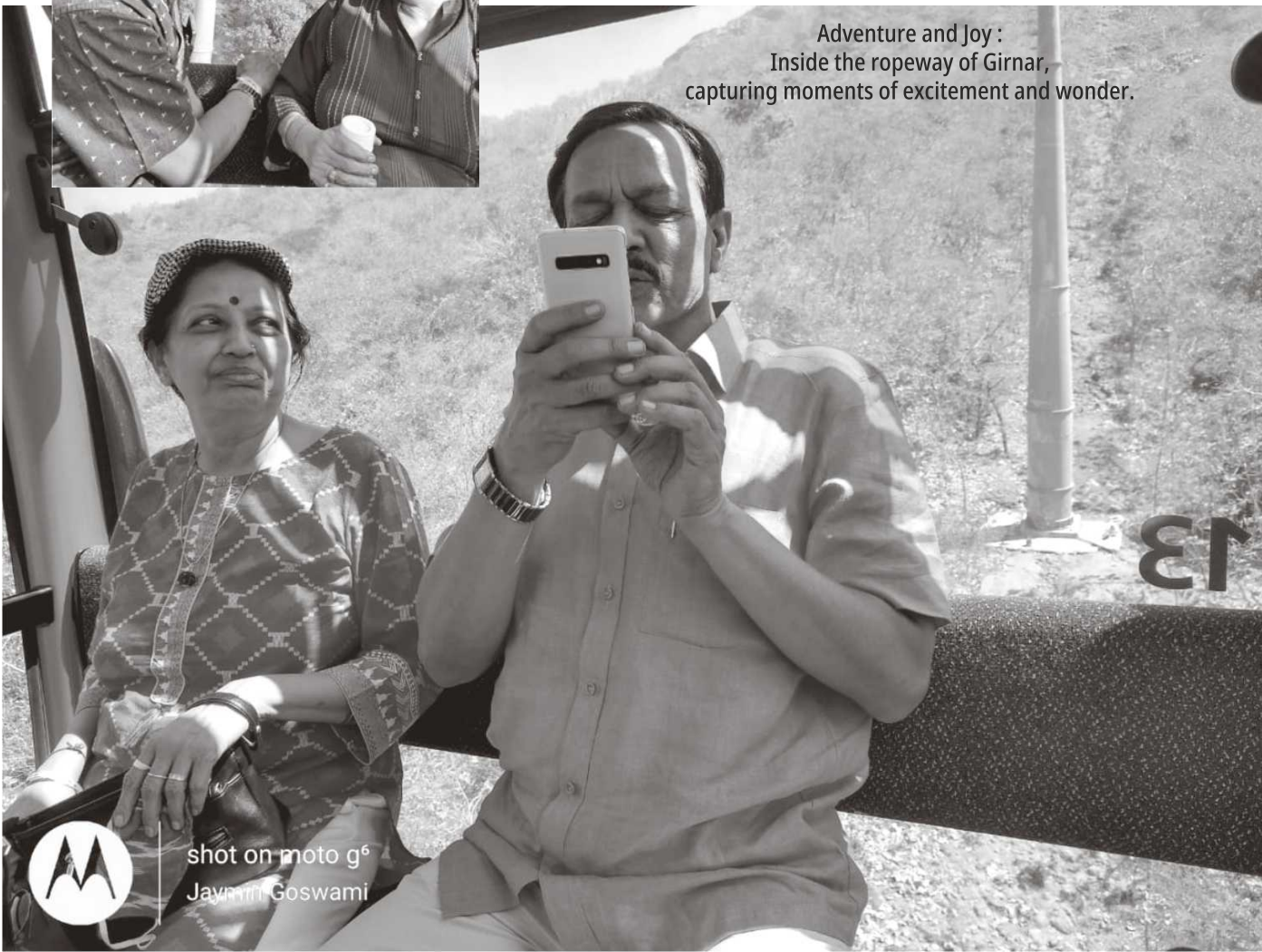
Jayu, Anup, Hemant, Ashok Parmar and Jyoti Parmar with Yashvant Goswami went to Mansarovar. It was only because of Rita's immense faith that no one experienced any trouble, and we all returned safely from Mansarovar.

At the beginning of 2017, in the presence of my couple friends who visit Rita's Wadi (farmhouse) in the lap of Girnar every week, Rita proposed that we should visit the twelve Jyotirlingas. I replied that I wouldn't enjoy the temple tour. Immediately, Rita said, "My Shivji will take you behind me," and that's exactly what happened. By the end of 2019, we, along with five friends and their wives, visited eleven Jyotirlingas: Somnath, Nageshwar, Bhimashankar, Trimbakeshwar, Grishneshwar, Baidyanath, Mahakaleshwar, Omkareshwar, Kashi Vishwanath, Rameswaram, and Mallikaarjuna.

On October 12, 2021, Rita and I, along with our friends, left to visit Kedarnath, the 12th Jyotirlinga. After completing the darshan (auspicious sight of a deity or a holy person) of Gangotri, Yamunotri, and Kedarnath happily, the weather



Adventure and Joy :
Inside the ropeway of Girnar,
capturing moments of excitement and wonder.



shot on moto g⁶
Jayanti Goswami

changed suddenly, and the helicopter service was canceled. Six people from our group got stuck in Kedarnath. After about 72 hours, the weather improved, and the helicopter service was restored. The stranded people rejoined us, and we then decided to cancel our onward journey to Badrinath and headed home, returning on October 22nd.

The ropeway for Girnar was inaugurated on October 24th, 2020. Following Rita's immense wish, we started using the ropeway and would spend the night with family and friends at Dharamshala (building devoted to religious or charitable purposes) and the Jain Temple at Girnar. We made three special trips to Ambaji, specifically to have lunch together. Rita, who had immense faith in Mahadev, shared a deep affection for Girnar. The Parikrama (circumambulation) of Girnar begins on the 11th day of the first month in the Gujarati calendar. Since Rita wanted to spend the night at the location, one of my friends from Junagadh, Mukesh Mehta, was running a lemonade camp for trekkers during the 2020 Parikrama in November. Rita, I, and our friends Bhikhu and Sarla stayed there for two nights, arranging a special tent and toilet block for convenience. During this time, we all also performed puja rituals in Havan at one place known as Godadiabapu's (Popular saint) place.

On February 2, 2022, Rita and I went with our couple friends to Jirawala Resort and Pawapuri, a Jain pilgrimage site in Rajasthan. Rita's deep desire to worship Lord Parshwanath in Pawapuri was evident, and I joined her in white clothes to perform the puja. Together, we applied sandalwood on the idol of Lord Parshwanath—on its right and left limbs, head, forehead, throat, heart, and navel. Rita's joy was immeasurable. After completing the five-day pilgrimage, we returned home...

This safe return from every trip with Rita had now become a habit for me. When sharing her wishes her first word still echoes through infinity, resonating in my mind: "Rajbha..."

"Ey! Rajbha, please come, won't the tea get cold?"

"Ey! Rajbha, call Shwetuda, let's have lentil fritters..."

"Ey! Rajbha, what will you eat in the evening?"

"Ey! Rajbha, let's go for a walk somewhere..."

"Shall we bring Ganesha home, Rajbha?"

"Rajbha, what if we also have wadi (farmhouse)?"

"Rajbha, let's go visit twelve Jyotirlingas?"

"Rajbha, Rajbha, Rajbha..."

On the evening of April 10, 2022, when I returned home from the factory, Rita said, "Rajbha, elder brother Kishor says you should go to a hill station like Mussoorie for a fortnight in this hot summer!"

Rita's diet had changed since March 28th, and I didn't feel the desire to go to Mussoorie at all because her gastric troubles had improved significantly. However, upon hearing the unmistakable desire in Rita's voice, I couldn't bring myself to avoid going to Mussoorie. It is often

said that, ultimately, the Siddha Jeev attains liberation from the Karma Bhoomi (the world). I purchased tickets for a trip to Dehradun, departing on April 17th, 2022, for a group of ten people, including my friends and their spouses.

The age of 30 is often considered the peak of youthful vigor, yet even at that age, Rita took on the responsibility of caring for Utkarsh and both of our mothers, always with a smile. Rarely does one encounter someone like Rita—a "Purnangini." After 36 years and five months of married life, my Jeev took its physical departure. The words written by someone at the time of her physical departure became mine:

O Jeev

I have made mistakes,
but you have turned them into accomplishment by improving them.

I have forgotten,
but you have written the history.

I have committed crimes,
but you forgave me without judging me.

I have lied,
but you have chosen to pretend that it is the truth.

I have often been agitated,
Yet each time, you gently soothed me with your calming presence.

I have made you mine,
and you, in turn, have made everything ours.

I may have neglected you at times,
Yet you patiently continue to await my acceptance.
No one else, not even Purnangini, could do what you have done.

It's just that you shouldn't leave like this my Jeev...

Jeev...

You are not before me, nor are you near,
yet you are ever-present.

Your presence is felt,
and your sweet voice, 'Rajbha,' echoes in my ears.

In the rising dawn or the setting dusk, in the twinkling stars
above or the clouds surrounding the sky,

I see the hues of your love, your companionship, your light, and your warmth.

I feel the void of life without you.

The color of your love is overflowing.

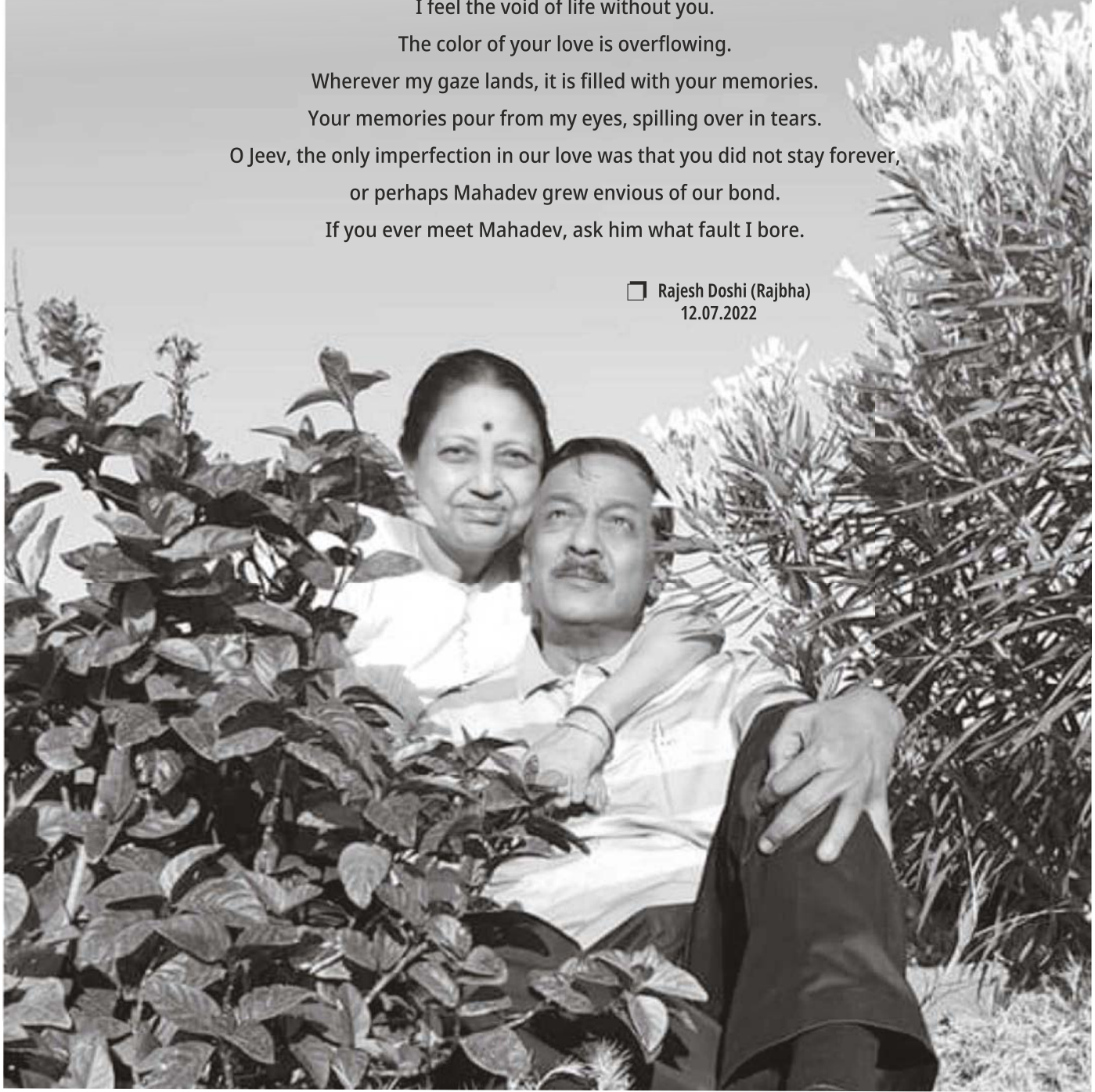
Wherever my gaze lands, it is filled with your memories.

Your memories pour from my eyes, spilling over in tears.

O Jeev, the only imperfection in our love was that you did not stay forever,
or perhaps Mahadev grew envious of our bond.

If you ever meet Mahadev, ask him what fault I bore.

□ Rajesh Doshi (Rajbha)
12.07.2022



Without you, the sun rose,
but the sky remained dim;
Without you, the flowers bloomed,
yet my eyes grew dry.
Without you, songs filled the air,
but my ears fell silent.
Without you, the jasmine opened,
but its fragrance faded away.
Without you,
without you...
let me not say anything more.
To whom should I even speak,
when it's all meaningless
without you?



Doshi Family and Rita Doshi

“Our Rita had all the tact. She not only kept the respect of her elders but also made others maintain that respect!” These words were spoken by Devyani Doshi, the eldest member of the Doshi family.

17 April, 2022

On the morning of April 17, 2022, after the security check at Rajkot airport, Rajoo and Rita along with four other couple friends, reached the lounge, and everyone appeared relaxed.

18 April, 2022

That morning, from the window of the luxurious room at Hotel Padmini Niwas, Rajoo Doshi gazed at the lush green scenery of Mussoorie, his eyes captivated by its beauty.

19 April 2022

Technically, this was the third day of Rita and Rajoo Doshi's trip to Mussoorie, along with their close circle of friends. However, they had only spent two nights in this picturesque and enchanting city so far...

20 April, 2022

After enjoying a delicious breakfast, everyone gathered at the grounds of Padmini Niwas Hotel. That day marked the birthday of Manish Mehta's wife, Puja, and everyone was taking photos in various poses to commemorate the occasion.


21 April, 2022

It was a quarter to midnight, and the date had officially turned to a new day. Hasmukh Manavadaria lay on the double bed in his room at the 'Ganga Sadan' hotel in Haridwar, while his wife, Madhu, was wiping her hands after washing them at the washbasin.

Twenty-seven hours and later...

“Please arrange an air ambulance for us.” The one who was your 'Jeev' (life), the one who took their last breath in your lap—no matter how profound the grief, the bereaved must bury that pain and gather the strength to move forward under the crushing weight of circumstances.





Doshi Family and Rita Doshi

Bagasara.

If this town in the Amreli district, with a population of barely forty thousand, was granted the status of a municipality in 2022, one can scarcely imagine what it was like back in the 1960s. At that time, Bagasara was governed by a town council. On September 10, 1965, in the home of Hari and Kanchan, residents of Bagasara, a daughter was born as their seventh child, following five elder sisters and one brother. She was named 'Rita.' At that time, perhaps no one could have imagined that this "abode of light" would grow to become such a "stupendous source of light" in her 57 years of life, illuminating the lives of many—not just within the Doshi and Panchamiya families, but far beyond!

The Panchamiya family was financially struggling when the youngest daughter was born. However, in a small town (and even fifty-seven years ago), relationships were not defined by financial status, but by intimacy and pure emotions. Hari Panchamiya, the father of seven children, including Rita, sold clothes in the surrounding villages, while their mother, Kanchan, often cooked for big events and occasions. Kanchan was a talented cook, and it seemed that the skill was passed down to her daughters, as all of them, including Rita, became proficient in the art of cooking. Though their financial situation was modest, Hari and Kanchan were determined that their children should be educated. They did their best to provide for all seven of them. Among them, their youngest daughter, Rita, proved to be the most academically gifted. She completed her

primary studies at the Government Girls School in Bagasara and later attended Zaverchand Meghani High School in Bagasara, where she completed her education up to the twelfth standard (higher secondary).

It was perhaps the work of nature that Rita, born as the youngest in the family, looked almost identical to her eldest sister, Madhu. Many people who saw them together would ask Madhu if Rita was her daughter. Madhu would happily explain that Rita was, in fact, her younger sister.

While Rita resembled her eldest sister Madhu in appearance, all her siblings knew that Rita shared more traits with their mother, Kanchan, than with their father, Hari. Rita inherited Kanchan's insight, her ability to present her work, and her skill in expressing her thoughts. Kanchan was always outspoken and unafraid to stand up against injustice or wrongdoing. On one occasion, she had been hired to cook for an event, but when the agreed-upon payment was withheld, she left without accepting anything, maintaining her dignity. When her daughter, Rita, learned of this, she joined her mother in seeking justice. After confronting the wrongdoer, Rita returned with the full, agreed-upon payment.

In the 1970s and 80s, life in a village or small town was peaceful and serene. Girls would do their homework after school, then gather with their neighborhood friends in the corridor to play and take walks in the 'bazaar.' However, Rita, along with her friends, would go to the Dharamshala (building devoted to religious or charitable purposes) next to their house every day. Inside the premises of the Dharamshala was a temple dedicated to Jageshwar Mahadev. Rita's routine visits to the temple slowly transformed into a deep love for Mahadev, much like Meera's love for Krishna. Rita herself was unaware of how Mahadev gradually became an integral part of her life. Around the same time, her cousin Mahendra Panchmiya (now in Mumbai), who had an interest in and studied astrology, examined Rita's palm. After studying it, he said, "Rita, you will receive so much happiness, love, and prosperity in life that we brothers will be jealous of you!"

While the prophecy may have brought joy to Rita's parents, brothers, and sisters, it was only Mahadev who was certain that it would come true in the most extraordinary way.

Adolescence is always a memorable phase, and it is when a person's personality starts to take shape. Rita, the youngest daughter of the Panchamiya family, was bold, brave, and daring—traits that were evident in her teenage years. Once, Rita was returning from watching the movie *Kalia* (1981) at Bagasara's Amrita movie theatre with her half-dozen friends, including Hansa and Kirti, when a young man mischievously shouted at them, "Did you go to see *Kalia*?"

Rita, without missing a beat, replied, "No, we came to see you!" (*Kalia* is associated with the

Cherished Bonds :
Hari and Kanchan Panchamiya,
Rita's parents, who brought warmth to the family.



Pillars of the Family :
Nanalal and Champa Doshi,
embodying wisdom, grace, and love.



A Legacy of Love :
Chandrakant and Shruti,
a couple who added joy and harmony to the family.









A Humble Beginning :
The simplicity of
Rajoo and Rita's
wedding in 1985,
marking the start of a
beautiful journey
together.



meaning "dark-colored" or "black") While all her friends remained silent, the young man was stunned by Rita's quick wit.

In 1981, while all her friends witnessed Rita's sharp presence of mind, she was the only unmarried daughter in the Panchamiya family. The very previous year, her fifth eldest sister, Shruti, married Chandrakant, the eldest son of Nanalal and Champa Doshi from Manavadar. The following year, in 1983, Chandrakant's younger brother, Kishor Doshi, married Nita, the daughter of Manu and Bhavna Kamdar, residents of Porbandar.

In 1985, with great simplicity and deep sorrow (following the unexpected death of Shruti), Rita, the youngest daughter of the Panchamiya family, left to marry Rajoo Doshi. During her Viddai (farewell), Father Hari Panchamiya, embracing his daughter, said, "Rita, as you leave, I feel as though our entire house is empty."



Rita arrived at her in-laws' home in Manavadar for the first time as a daughter-in-law. At just twenty years old, she was already tasked with numerous responsibilities. The Doshi family she entered consisted of an elderly mother-in-law and father-in-law, a widowed elder brother-in-law, Chandrakant, and a one-and-three-quarter-year-old niece (who would later be like a daughter to her) named Khushboo. Her two sisters-in-law were undeniably like sisters to her, but at the time, Jayu was only seventeen years old, while the youngest, Shaili, was not yet fifteen. When Rajoo and Rita married, Kishor, her brother-in-law who worked as a government employee, and his wife Nita were living in Bhavnagar. The eldest brother-in-law, Chandrakant Doshi, worked at the State Bank of Saurashtra and was often occupied with union activities. Meanwhile, Rajoo was tirelessly working to establish and make the newly set-up factory a success.

Thus, Rita Doshi became an integral member of the family, and this entire decade was marked by hard work and struggle for Rajoo Doshi. From 1986 to 1994 (eight years), Rajoo built "Rajoo Engineers" into a successful business, drawing inspiration and guidance from his elder brother. However, it became clear that while the sky was ready for soaring, Manavadar, as a base, was no longer sufficient. In 1994, it was decided that "Rajoo Engineers" needed to grow, and the roots had to be planted in Rajkot itself.

While the focus during these years was naturally on the

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Jeev
Rita Doshi

success (and struggles) of Rajoo and Chandrakant in making "Rajoo Engineers" a strong, successful business, what often got overlooked was that, throughout this time, all the responsibilities of the Doshi family rested on Rita Doshi, who was only twenty years old when she assumed these duties—quietly and gracefully. Undoubtedly, as time passed, her age increased, but so did her responsibilities, a fact that should not be forgotten.

For the first five years after joining her in-laws, Rita made most of the family decisions at the Doshi family's "Vatsalya" house in Manavadar. In 1990, Devyani, the eldest daughter-in-law, joined the family, but even then, many of the decisions and responsibilities remained on Rita's shoulders. During this time, Jayu (in 1987) and Shaili (in 1993) got married. Rita also took great joy in organizing the marriages of Khushboo, Hina (the daughter of London-based Kanti Gohil, the fourth brother of the Doshi family, in 2008), as well as Kruti (in 2012) and Utsav (in 2014), all of which were celebrated with much grandeur.

Rita never felt weighed down by the responsibilities. On the contrary, she always stepped forward and took on every responsibility and service with grace. She also took on the responsibility of organizing the engagement and marriage of Upasana and Mansi, the daughters of her elder brother Bipin Panchamiya. Later, after the sudden death of her neighbor, Gayatri Bhatt from Manavadar, Rita considered it her "duty" to arrange the marriage of Gayatri's daughters, Bhavika and Poonam. When Gayatri's son, Vishal Bhatt, came to seek blessings with his wife, Rita burst into tears and said, "The responsibility Gayatri entrusted to me is over today, so now I can be at peace."

While weddings are often associated with joy, excitement, and celebration, the underlying challenges are sometimes overlooked. In Rita's case, it is important to remember that during this time, her son Utkarsh (born in 1995) faced significant physical health problems until 2011. Rita mostly managed these challenges on her own, as Utkarsh required her constant care, which led her to live separately from Rajoo and the Doshi family in Manavadar. By the time Utkarsh turned fifteen, he had undergone seven surgeries and received more than two hundred stitches, but he remained under Rita's vigilant care until he fully recovered. Utkarsh, deeply emotional, says, "If God were to ask me to describe my health, only my mother could provide a detailed account, as she has taken exceptional care of me. Everyone consoles me, but my sorrow is that I will forever be indebted to Ritamum for her sacrifices. Even if I wanted to, I could never repay her."



For 26 years after their marriage (until 2011), Rita lived in Manavadar, while Rajoo spent only three years (from 1997 to 2000) with her during the seventeen-year span between 1994 and 2011. In 2011, Rita, along with Utkarsh, moved to Rajkot to live in 'Shrutina'. For the previous thirteen years, Rajoo Doshi had been commuting regularly between Rajkot and Manavadar.

During these years, it was not that the Doshi family was distant from Rita. Every weekend, the entire Doshi family would come to Manavadar, or Rita Bhabhi, Utkarsh, and Kruti would visit Rajkot. On every small vacation, all the children would gather in Manavadar because, like Rajoo Doshi, Rita Doshi was also the beloved 'jeev' (soul) of the Doshi family. As Utsav Doshi says, there was only one rule in Auntie's household "Eat, live as you wish, and party!"

During the twenty-six years in Manavadar, in addition to caring for Kruti and Utkarsh, Rita was also responsible for the development and operations of Shaishav School. After Nanalal Doshi's death in 1984, the legacy of the Doshi family continued through Champa (who passed away in 2006), who also stayed with Rita in Manavadar. Like Rita, Champa also had a deep affection for Manavadar. In the last eight years of her life, she suffered three leg injuries and, as a result, became bedridden during the final years of her life. Later, due to diabetes, she was unable to open her eyelids and would often forget to chew the food in her mouth. Throughout this time, Rita selflessly cared for her mother-in-law, Champa, as well as her own mother, Kanchan. Kanchan, who also came to live in Manavadar with her son Bipin, fell victim to gangrene during her stay.

Since 2016, Rita continuously took care of her elder brother Bipin. Yet, the undeniable truth is that Rita left this world without ever receiving the care she so selflessly gave to others.



"Our Rita had all the tact. She not only kept the respect of her elders but also made others maintain that respect!"

These words from Devyani Doshi, the eldest member of the Doshi family, echo in your ears, yet your attention are drawn to an absolutely captivating life-sized portrait of Rita Doshi, displayed in the large drawing room of the bungalow Shrutina. The picture, taken by photographer Mahendra Rathod at daughter Karishma's wedding in 2021, is so vivid that it feels as though Rita will speak to you with warmth any moment now.

Devyani continues: "She was incredibly talented. She kept in touch with everyone. If someone wanted to go to Haridwar, she would call ahead and make arrangements for puja and aarti (Hindu ritual that involves waving a flame or lamp in front of a deity as a sign of devotion) there. She was able to reach everywhere and accomplish all the tasks.!"

"-And our Rita would tackle and manage everyone with

Rita, the youngest daughter of the Panchamiya family, was bold, brave, and daring - traits that were evident in her teenage years.

Jeev
Rita Doshi

ease." Kishor Doshi says, recalling one incident after another. While living in Manavadar, Rita Doshi managed the 'Shaishav School,' which brought her into contact with people ranging from Mamlatdars to MLAs. It is often advised to avoid saying anything displeasing to a high-ranking official or leader, or to sugar-coat the truth. However, Rita Doshi spoke the truth boldly and voiced her opinions without hesitation. Elder- brother- in law, Kishor Doshi, would say, "Rita was the only one in our family who, if her eyes rolled or her tone of voice changed, all the children knew there was no point in arguing anymore! She had such authority that no one ever questioned her once she spoke, yet at the same time, she was able to offer boundless love, affection, and care to everyone.

Parents often give nicknames to their beloved children, but for Rita Doshi, all the children of the Doshi family were beloved, and that is why she gave those nicknames and always called them by those names. Khushboo was "Bittu" for everyone, but for Rita Doshi, Pallav was "Palio", Utsav was "Uthyo," Kruti was "Kruta," Karishma was "Kario," Utkarsh was "Chotu," Ayank was "Ayu," and Naira was "Nayu." Sister-in-law Shaili was "Silky," and Jayu was "Jayli" to her. She affectionately called her sons-in-law Shwetang "Shwetudo," Chintan "Chintio," and Ankit "Ankitdu." Nephew Unnati was "Unu", Tanmay was "Tanu", Prarit was "Pero", and Pulkit was "Pulo" to her. Additionally, Sonal and Rupal, the two daughters of her maternal uncle, who used to visit and stay for months during vacations, were affectionately called Sonki and Rupli by her.

Rita's bond with all the children was deeply affectionate. Though Rita was technically the aunt of her niece, Binita Ghelani, Binita always called her "Ma"(Mother) and referred to her as "Tu" (means you- "tu" is used when speaking to one person your own age or younger)just like a mother. Binita recalls, "When aunt Rita gets ready after dressing up, I would say, "Ma, you look like a firecracker!""

It's no surprise when it comes to the bond between aunt and nephew; if you saw elder brother-in-law Kishor Doshi and Rita talking or joking, you wouldn't immediately realize that they were the elder brother-in-law and the younger brother's wife! Their bond was so warm and friendly, it transcended traditional formalities, reflecting a relationship built on mutual respect and affection.

"... But in the Doshi family, the pair 'Rita-Nita' was especially famous. Though they were wives of two brothers, it felt as if they were two real sisters, one younger and one elder!" says Rita Doshi's sister-in-law, Shaili Ajmera. Nita and Rita, the wives of elder brother and younger brother, share an unimaginable bond. Their bond was so close and natural, it transcended the boundaries of in-laws, embodying the warmth and affection of true sisterhood. In 'Shrutina,' a single breakfast plate is served in the morning, and both Rita and Nita share breakfast together, enjoying the

simplicity and warmth of the moment. They also eat meals together. If one is late, the other invariably waits, but both always have breakfast and meals together. This was the routine after Rita Doshi moved from Manavadar to Rajkot. Rita has only shared a plate with two people—one is Rajoo Doshi, and the other is her elder sister-in-law, Nita Doshi. Kishor Doshi highlights the affection between the two of them, with these words: "After Rajoo, if anyone misses Rita, it's Nita!"

Nita and Rita shop together, walk together in the evenings, fast together, and even visit the racecourse in the evening, where they enjoy wafers and almond shakes, while fasting. Nita Doshi says, "Rita was a very lively person, always mixing with everyone and liked by all. She was so talkative that when people saw us together, they often asked, 'Is this (Rita) your elder sister-in-law?'"

"Not only Rita, but Rajoo too—though he is younger than me—Rita could be considered my elder sister or even my mother. She was emotional, loving, and kind, just like an elder sister or mother!"

Kanti Gohil, a Londoner originally from Manavadar, is regarded as the fourth brother by the entire Doshi family. He married Hina, his daughter, in Manavadar, and Rita and Rajoo Doshi took full responsibility for the marriage arrangements. Kanti, who moved to London in 1986, the second year of Rajoo and Rita's marriage, always stayed at Shrutina when he visited India and left from there for London. He says, "Every time I say goodbye, my wife Manjula and I cry profusely because we are so loved by everyone that we don't want to leave!"

Whenever Kanti stayed in Rajkot, Rita and Rajoo would always insist on one thing for sure. Kanti recalls, "They would constantly insist that since Manjula and I retired, we should move to Rajkot. They even promised to give me a bungalow, a car, and a factory!"

As part of her daily routine, it was mandatory for Rita to call Kanti and Manju in London to keep in touch. They would talk about everything, insisting on visiting each other, sharing updates, and more. It almost never happened that they missed talking to each other for two consecutive days. Even when the Doshi couple went to Mussoorie with their friends, Rita called Kanti from there, and in one such call, she told him, "In June 2022, we are planning to visit London with another friend and his spouse."

"Mum was absolutely perfect in both customs and worldly affairs, effortlessly balancing tradition with practicality." After Rita

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Jeet
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Doshi's elder daughter, Kruti, married Chintan Rajpura, it became an unwritten rule of Rita's life to call Kruti every night at 10 o'clock. Rita always teased Kruti about one issue—Kruti, like her father, didn't keep any vows. However, after the birth of her daughter, Naira, Rita encouraged Kruti to start observing two vows, Shitla Satam and Holi (Two festivals). Kruti has been fasting for these festivals for years, embracing the tradition with devotion and discipline. She says, "Mother used to insist that I perform the vows and rituals along with the worship, and so I make sure to take care of that too!"

Rita stayed in Manavadar for a long time with Kruti and Utkarsh, the youngest son of the Doshi family. Utkarsh, also known as "Chhotu," was her dearest friend. Utkarsh holds the most cherished memories and treasures of the many dimensions of her personality. (After Chandrakant Doshi) Rajoo, Utkarsh, and Rita are the only members of the Doshi family who share a fondness for old film songs. Even when Rita was busy with cleaning activities in preparation for the Diwali festival in Manavadar, old songs played in the background at such a volume that no other noise could be heard. One of Rita's favorite songs was "Dil to Hai Dil, Dil Ka Aitbar Kya Kije" ("Heart is heart, why should one trust the heart?") from *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* (a popular Bollywood movie). Her cellphone ringtone was "Jo vada Kiya, wo nibhana padega, roke zamana chahe, roke Khudai, tum ko aana padega!" ("Fulfill the promise that was made, whether the world or God stops you, you will have to come to me").

Rita was fond of traveling, dressing up, and had a passion for learning new things. While in Manavadar, she even took harmonium lessons and learned English to help manage the school more effectively.

Rajoo Doshi did not take the most thrilling ride at Disneyland, but Rita enjoyed it with her son Utkarsh. Once a year, she would sort through her unused clothes, including expensive sarees, and send them to people she liked and cared for. A week before leaving for Mussoorie on April 17th, while sending off her clothes in this manner, she remarked, "Well, this is the last time I am sending clothes..."

Why did Rita use the words "last time"? Was she sensing something happening in the future? The answer is yes. It was not unusual for Rita to say something that seemed prophetic, and it would often come true. For instance, a member of the 'Rajoo Group' was riding a motorcycle at a dangerously high speed on the way from Manavadar to Junagadh. When Rita learned about it, she couldn't stop saying, "One day, his arms and legs will be severed. Someone should warn him!"

The very next day, the person was in a serious accident and lost his arm permanently. On another occasion, when a bride and groom were seated the wrong way in the wedding mandap, Rita warned Gor Maharaj (the priest), saying that this was inauspicious and such a situation often

leads to divorce. Gor Maharaj dismissed her concern, but in the future, the couple indeed divorced. Similarly, when Rita noticed the haunting attachment of an old woman to a particular place, she remarked that this attachment would claim her life—and indeed, the old woman passed away there.

Rita's words often carried such significance that coincidentally it became reality in her own case too. After moving to the wadi (farmhouse) in Girnar's lap, she and Rajoo initially stayed in a house where the caretakers lived. Instead of staying in a closed room, Rita kept both her bed and Rajoo's bed in an open area. The guards warned her not to take the risk, as leopards roamed the area at night. Rita's only response always was, "Pancham is not going to become Chhath for anyone anytime." This saying reflects her belief that certain events, particularly death, are predestined and cannot be changed by time or circumstance. She would add, "We will sleep in the open," showing her fearless attitude and unwavering confidence in the face of danger. Her words echoed deep conviction in the inevitability of fate, where no matter what the risks, what is meant to happen will happen, and one must face it with courage.

Whenever danger was mentioned, Rita would reply with the same phrase: "Pancham (the fifth day" of the lunar fortnight in the Hindu calendar) is not going to become Chhath (sixth day of the lunar fortnight in the Hindu calendar) for anyone anytime." Her passing occurred on day Chaitra Vad Pancham, the 5th day of the Chaitra month according to the Gujarati Lunar calendar, and it happened exactly one hour before the Pancham Tithi ended! This precise alignment of events with the time she had mentioned earlier—her belief that if something is destined for Pancham, it cannot change to Chathh—adds a profound, almost prophetic, significance to her words. Her passing on this specific day serves as a poignant reflection of her faith in fate and the inevitability of life's course.

The Doshi couple and their friends endured three days of stormy weather in Kedarnath while traveling to Char Dham, facing numerous challenges. When Rajoo and Rita safely returned to Shrutina from their trip, their concerned cousin, Binita Ghelani, called dear Aunt Rita to inquire about her well-being. Rita replied, "We are not such holy souls that we can find salvation at the feet of Kedarnath Dada! See, I've returned in the same condition as when I left."

Rita breathed her last in Haridwar, the land of Mahadev, a place where there was no particular reason for anyone to visit. By

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allowing the events to unfold as Rita had predicted, did Mahadev prove to Rita and others that she was indeed a holy soul?

Some questions don't require answers because the questions themselves are the answers.

"Mom saw my face on the eighth day after my birth!" Just like his father Rajoo Doshi, who was thoughtful, and his mother Rita, who was eloquent in speech, when Utkarsh was born in 1995, Rita was unconscious due to the anesthesia from a cesarean section. Utkarsh had to be taken to Rajkot for further treatment. At that time, Rajoo Doshi opened the closed railway gate in Jetpur (nearby city) to bring Utkarsh to Rajkot for treatment, and as a result, Rita could see Utkarsh's face only on the eighth day.

When analyzing the personalities of his parents, Utkarsh Doshi says, "Dad was excellent at taking on challenging projects, while Mum was proficient at calming the situation and seeing it through to completion."

Whether it was the Wadi (farmhouse) in Girnar's lap, the old-new 'Vatsalya' house in Manavadar, a collection of long-play records, an old-age home, an alternative treatment clinic in Rajkot, or the Shaishav School in Manavadar—whatever challenging task Rajoo Doshi took on, Rita Doshi ensured its successful and flawless completion with her dedication and devotion. While Utkarsh Doshi was the primary reason behind the establishment of Shaishav School, Rita took charge as the managing trustee, not merely as Utkarsh's mother. Utkarsh Doshi often had to stand outside the classroom for being fifteen minutes late to school. The students' outfits for Shaishav School's Navratri celebrations were required to be different every other day. Rita not only insisted on this but would also travel to Junagadh personally to select the clothing. In 2021, when the Doshi family started 'Chandrashruti' Old-Age Home in Manavadar, Rita herself visited furniture shops to ensure the beds, mattresses, and chairs were comfortable for the elderly.

"She never appeared to be doing anything out of force or without genuine interest.!" This was how her son-in-law Chintan Rajpara referred to his mother-in-law, whom he affectionately called 'Rita Ba.' He felt no burden in living with her, and often jokingly expressed his wish to have a shirt sewn from one of her Bandhani sarees (a traditional Gujarati print). Although Rita Ba never gave him a Bandhani saree, Chintan appreciated her warmth and said, "A person craves love, care, and warmth, not money, and I learned this from Rita Ba." But what she did on a day-to-day basis, no one, including me, could do. Rita Ba remained in daily contact with all her loved ones—Khushboo, Kruti, Karishma, three sisters, Kanti uncle from London, the sisters' children, the wadi, and the old age home. She used to make about fifty calls a day, staying constantly connected with everyone Chintan remarked, "It takes love and a sense of responsibility to do this, something Rita Ba had in

abundance!"

"It was rare for me to meet Rita mum in person, but we spoke regularly on the phone, and it always felt like my mother was concerned about me and missing me from back home.!" These are the words of Ankit Shah, the youngest son-in-law of Rajoo and Rita, who is settled in Los Angeles. Because of the pandemic, Ankit Shah went back to Los Angeles immediately after marrying Karishma. Rita was constantly worried about him in Rajkot. Whenever Rita called him, she would say, 'In America, you will stay for a very short time and then come back.' Ankit Shah recalls that Rita mum was distressed when she found out that he was eating the same food the next day that he had prepared the night before. Despite explaining with a lot of emphasis that this was normal in America due to his busy schedule, she would still insist in every video call that he should come back to India soon!

This insistence from Rita also became a reality after the sudden passing of Rita. Karishma had requested Ankit to come back to India, as she now wanted to stay with her dad. Ankit also decided that he would settle in Rajkot permanently in October 2022.

Urvashi Utkarsh Doshi, with whom Rita had rare personal contact, often spoke with her over the phone for long hours. During their conversations, Rita would frequently talk about Utkarsh and Rajoo. In the eight months following the engagement of Urvashi and Utkarsh on 24th August 2021, Rita left the world. However, Utkarsh believes that his mother must have known the right timing in her own way, which is why she chose the date 29th November for their marriage. This was the same date on which Rajoo and Rita, Kruti and Chintan, as well as Chintan's Mother Jagruti and Father Vijay, had also gotten married. Urvashi shares, "I am often busy with work and studies for eighteen hours a day, but mom didn't like this. In every phone call, she would tell me, 'You don't need to work so hard, drop everything now!'"

'kaki ke saath har do pahar ko main bethati thi!' (I used to sit with aunty every afternoon), says daughter-in-law Konkana Utsav Doshi in her bengali-tinged Hindi. '...aur aram se baithe baithe hum panchayat karte the. Unko sab ki parwah rehti thi aur sachche dil se wo sab ka achha karne ki jaddo-jaahed mein raheti thi!' (We used to sit for long hours and talk about so many things. She was always concerned about everyone and, with a sincere heart, she constantly tried to do good for others.)"

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Jeev
Rita Doshi

Shwetang Monani, the eldest son-in-law of the family, offers an insightful analysis of Konkana Doshi's words. He says, 'In our house, for every situation, the solution was simple: Rita Aunty. And Rita Aunty had only one person she trusted to handle every little task, to assign everything – and that person was me. If someone questioned her about assigning the work to me, her answer was always the same: "Shwetu is not my son-in-law; he is my son. And do you have to feel shy or discreet in giving tasks to your own son?" Rita Aunty always referred to me as her son, not her son-in-law.'

When Doshi's family went to Leh-Ladakh, Rita was shopping in the Ladakh Market. She even bought a gift for Shwetang Monani's sister-in-law. When Shwetang tried to stop her, Rita signaled him to stay quiet and bought the gift for his sister-in-law.

Rajoo and Rita took all the children of the Doshi family (from 2006 to 2012) abroad to places like Switzerland, France, London, Spain, Italy, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, enjoying fun-filled leisure tours. Even then, Rita was always shopping for herself and her loved ones with a whole heart. Utsav Doshi fondly recalls, "We spent every small or big vacation in Manavadar, and those were the most memorable days of our lives. I remember Rita Aunty calling a car for us from the factory, and we would go there to play cricket. At night, we watched movies on a VCR. Whether it was Manavadar or a trip abroad, we kids had the most fun with our uncle and aunt because we could get up to all sorts of mischief!"

Rita was fond of wearing feminine makeup, sarees, dresses with matching sandals, ornaments, bangles, and she loved perfumes too. Khushboo Doshi says, "You can find sarees or dresses in every color in Maa's (Rita's) wardrobe. If there's even a 20% difference in color, she must add that color to her collection!"

It wasn't just when she was abroad; even in Rajkot, Rita would go shopping and keep buying things for her as well as for others. Daughter Karishma and daughter-in-law Chandni Pallav Doshi always experienced that when they went shopping with Aunt Rita, they had to carry money or credit/debit cards in their purses because Aunt Rita would spend all her money on shopping, and even then, her shopping spree wouldn't stop!

Apart from touring and dressing, one of Rita's hobbies was playing Teen Patti (Indian Poker or Flush). During the "Janmashtami" Festival (celebrating Lord Krishna's birth every year) or when her sisters, friends, and spouse were around at the Wadi (farmhouse) she would always play Teen Patti. When playing with economically disadvantaged individuals, she would make sure to repay any money they lost during the game.

Aside from her love of shopping, Rita had another hobby that left a lasting impression on

everyone she encountered. She had a passion for cooking delicious food and took great joy in insisting on serving more than enough food to her guests. She believed in the traditional custom of Indian hospitality, where the insistence on feeding guests, even against their resistance, reflects a blend of cultural values, social norms, and a deep desire to create a welcoming environment. Many times, in Manavadar, right around lunchtime, Rajoo would call from the factory to say that eight people were coming for lunch. While other housewives might have been shocked by such last-minute guests, Rita would calmly reply, "Come in twenty minutes; the meal will be ready." This happened countless times, yet her food's taste and her enthusiasm for serving it never wavered. Mr. Mulu Barot, a senior person in the advertising field who had enjoyed Rita's cooking many times in Manavadar, says, "Sometimes, Rita would become so 'determined' while serving food, offering it with such love and insistence that I would end up eating twice as much as I could manage. Later, even when she approached the dining table, I would feel a little apprehensive about being served even more."

"That's why I was Rita Kaki's favorite son!" says Shwetang Monani. "Aunt loved to cook, and I loved to eat, so she would always tease everyone, saying, 'Learn to eat like my son, Swetu!'"

Rajoo, who has been enjoying parathas (flatbread, made from a mixture of flour, water, and oil) and tea made by Rita for forty years, still believes that no one can make parathas (flatbread, made from a mixture of flour, water, and oil) like her. After tasting Rita's "potato poha" (potatoes with flattened rice and spices), Shwetang Monani refuses to eat poha made by anyone else. Mrs. Shaili admits, "Neither I nor anyone else can make dal (lentil curry) like Rita." Mrs. Shaili's husband, Hemant Ajmera, was so fond of Rita's dal that he insisted on eating it every Wednesday. Jayu can never forget the taste of Mohanthal (a popular sweet made of chickpea flour) and Adadiya (a popular sweet made of black gram flour) made by Rita, while the daughter Karishma Shah fondly remembers how Rita mum used to make handmade Gulab jamuns (rose berry/sugar dumplings made of milk solids) in Bangalore and even in America. Pallav also adored the Punjabi dishes and dal made by her aunt.

Karishma, as well as Doshi family children like Khushboo, Pallav, Utsav, and Kruti, studied in places like Bangalore, Germany, America, Yorkshire, London, Birmingham, Ahmedabad, and Vallabh Vidyanagar. Every month, Rita would make and send parcels of homemade treats from her bungalow, "Shrutina," to all

'In our house,
for every
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Aunty.

the children, both in India and abroad. These treats included Mohanthal, Adadiya, Gulab Jamun, Chorafali (crispy and spicy chickpea delicacy), Chavana (mixed fried snacks), Maida Puri (fried snack made from white flour), Khakhra (crispy bread), and Thepla (flatbread made with a mix of flour and spices) (flatbread made with a mix of flour and spices). Utsav Doshi recalls, "So many snacks were sent from home that I would distribute them among my friends or roommates at the hostel. That's why my friends were always happy with me!"

Once, all the brothers and sisters were eating at the table and speaking in English," says Pallav Doshi. "At that moment, Aunt ordered, 'It won't work if you talk in English while eating...' She always spoke her mind, straight to your face. Even if we thought someone might be offended, no one ever truly felt bad about Aunt's stern words or anger. There was always a kind of magical quality to her speech.

This was perhaps a testament to Rita's strong personality. While living in Manavadar from 2000 to 2010, she managed Shaishav School and oversaw various educational tasks across different offices. Her efficiency was such that she often handled most of the work over the phone. When Rita lived in Manavadar, if an unknown biker rode around the street twice, on the third round, she would grab him by the neck and threaten him so strongly that he would never dare to return to that street. Vishal Bhatt, who lived across from Rita during his childhood, says, "While others stayed silent or endured quietly, Rita confronted everyone fearlessly, without concern for caste or religion!"

Her bold nature, fearless personality, and determination to solve any challenge earned her the nickname 'Santok.' When there was a mistake or carelessness, the way Rita would confront the person responsible, led Utkarsh, Utsav, and Pallav to lovingly call her 'Gabbar' (the iconic character from the classic Bollywood film Sholay, known for being obstinate, headstrong, and stubborn). Despite her tough exterior, for those who had never been confronted by her, she was always known as 'Ritabhabhi' in Manavadar. This affectionate term was used by both male and female students at the school. Rita would often say to her husband, Rajbha, "Look at how many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law I have!"



"The truth is, my mother (Rita) had to wait a long time after marriage to experience the happy days," shares Khushboo (Chandrakant Doshi) Monani. She was Rita's second love, after Rajoo. Khushboo could perhaps understand Rita's heart better than even her husband, Rajoo. Khushboo says, "Look at my mother's life. At the age of twenty-four, she took on the responsibilities of being a wife, daughter-in-law, aunt, mother, and daughter. At that time, Kishor Uncle and Nita Aunt were in Bhavnagar due to their government jobs, and the responsibility of

managing the household in Manavadar fell on Mum (Rita). There was no prosperity or facilities back then, unlike today. My mother's illness caused us a lot of financial stress. Later, my grandfather (Nanalal Doshi) passed away. When the Rajkot factory started, Uncle (Rajoo Doshi) had to travel back and forth for nearly three years. He would come home late at night and leave early in the morning. With Utkarsh's illness, my mother (Rita) had to endure the pain of being apart from her husband, daughter (Karishma), and the entire Doshi family for fifteen years.

When the factory was still in its developmental stage, my father and uncle (Chandrakant and Rajoo) would stay at the factory until 4 a.m. during the manufacturing process of the machines, adding even more strain on my mother. She had to stay away from her husband because she needed to raise her son. She had to be apart from her daughter, Karishma, because she wanted to provide her with a good education. She also had to care for her mother-in-law (Mrs. Champa) while raising Utkarsh and Kruti. My mother (Rita) lived with constant incompleteness, so it's no surprise that she sometimes became touchy, emotional, or a little fierce."

Rita's world revolves around the Doshi family. Her universe consists of everyone who comes into contact with her, and the center of it all is Rajoo.

Rajoo, who was busy with the factory and business from 1981 to 2006 for a continuous twenty-five years, never remembered a birthday or wedding anniversary. However, Rita never expressed disappointment because of this. Speaking about his 'Jeev,' Rajoo says, "Rita's mood would definitely worsen two times. In 'Shrutina,' she used to make 100 kg of Adadiya every year and feed me one in the morning and one in the evening. It was mandatory. If I refused, her mood would be sour. Even if I didn't eat properly or ate less, she would feel bad. She knew that I only wanted parathas (flatbread, made from a mixture of flour, water, and oil) for dinner, but every day she would call and ask, 'Rajbha, what should I cook for dinner?' Even though I always gave the same answer, she still asked. Sometimes, I would tell Rita that I was craving something spicy, so she would make spicy pudding and vegetables with garlic, and she would be much happier that day!"

Like any loving couple, Rajoo and Rita had their sweet quarrels and reconciliations. When they were living in Manavadar, Utkarsh expressed a desire for a bike on his birthday, but Rita didn't want Utkarsh to commute to school by bike (instead of a car). Over the phone, her husband agreed with her point, so the bike gift was canceled. However, the father prevailed over the husband. On

Rita was fond of wearing feminine makeup, sarees, dresses with matching sandals, ornaments, bangles, and she loved perfumes too.

Jeev
Rita Doshi

Utkarsh's birthday, Rajoo arrived in Manavadar with a bike, and naturally, Rita was not pleased.

Chandni Pallav Doshi, whom Rita always calls 'Beta' (daughter) and never by name, says, "If Uncle and Aunt are angry with each other, we would know because they are so affectionate, and their presence keeps the atmosphere alive. But if there's a 'sweet quarrel,' both of them go silent and don't listen to anyone. However, we, the children, convince them and make them talk again!"

Now, let's talk about an event. On March 7, 2021, Rajoo Doshi entered his 60th year, and Rita began preparations a month in advance with the children of the Doshi family. Decorations, food, invitations to close friends and family, gifts, dress codes—everything was arranged secretly from Rajoo because he was to be given a surprise. However, Rajoo had no interest in celebrating such an occasion for himself and instead found immense joy in celebrating for everyone else in the Doshi family. At Shrutina everyone was putting the finishing touches on the birthday preparations, an unaware Rajoo called Rita from the factory: "You come to the factory; we need to go to the wadi and stay there (on the birthday)!"

Rita was caught in a dilemma. If she refused to go to the beloved wadi her husband would immediately suspect something and be displeased. But if she agreed, how could she explain to the fifty people who had been invited to the celebration? Chandni Pallav Doshi says, "Uncle was always convinced by us (the children) and would do anything we wished, even though he didn't want to. Finally, we all called Uncle and said, 'We want to stay with you, which means, instead of going to the wadi (farmhouse), you come to Shrutina!'"

Rajoo agreed, and March 7, 2021, became a memorable day for the Doshi family!



"Mum (Rita) always thought and lived with her heart, not her mind!" says Khushboo. "She spoke whatever was in her heart because of her innocence. Even if she was angry with someone today, tomorrow she might go to the extent of praying for their well-being. The sadness of others would immediately affect her. She knew how to work and get things done. We've seen her travel to Germany to find ajmo (carom seeds) and asafoetida, and even buy a bag in Paris, despite not knowing the language.

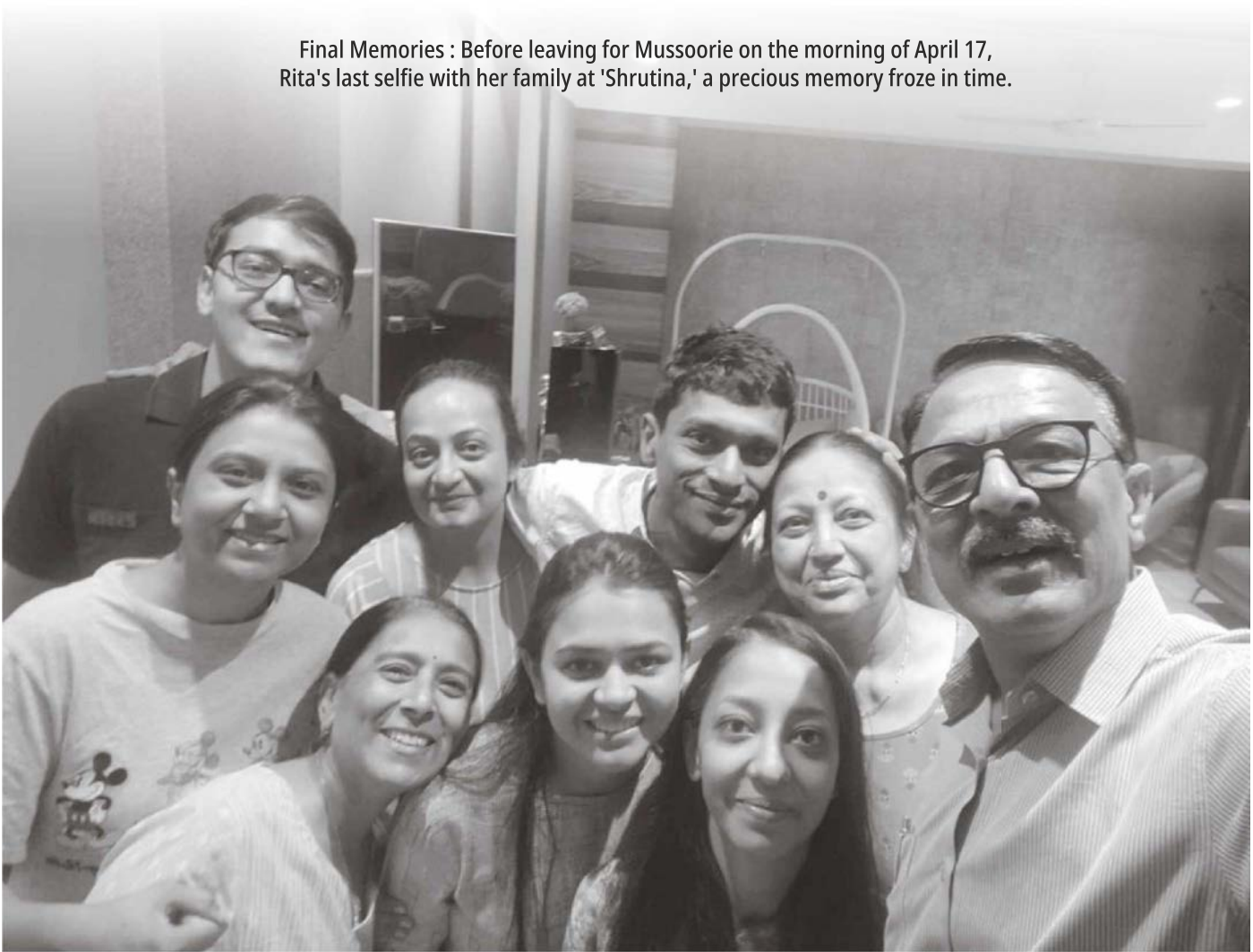
"Mother always says that she won't like it if you lie. This idea became so deeply ingrained in my mind that now, I can't bear it when someone lies to me!" says Karishma, the daughter who spent the least time with Rita. Karishma lived with Uncle Kishor and Aunty Neeta while studying. Rita and Utkarsh moved from Manavadar to Rajkot when Karishma was around seventeen or eighteen years old. After that, Karishma stayed in Bangalore for four years and then in America for three and a half years for higher education, which meant she couldn't stay with her mother, Rita,

continuously. However, despite being far away in America and Bangalore, she kept in daily touch with Rita. Karishma recalls, "From February 2020, I stayed with Mom for two years, and we grew very close. If she had pain from her gastric issues, she would call me to Shrutina from the office... Like Mom, I am also a devotee of Shiva, and when I mentioned doing the 'Rudrabhishek Yagna' (a sacred Vedic ritual performed to worship Lord Shiva) in 2021, Mom was so happy!"

However, when her daughter Karishma, a devotee of Shiva, began working in her office, Rita discovered one day that there was no temple there and that the Diya (an oil lamp offered to a deity for divine blessings) wasn't lit. That day, Rita scolded Karishma with affection, and the very next day, she gathered materials like a photo frame of Mahadev, a Diya, wicks, an oil container, ghee (clarified butter), incense sticks, and matches for Karishma's office. While packing her belongings that night, she urged Karishma, "You should set up a temple in your office tomorrow and start lighting the Diya. By the time I call from Mussoorie, the temple should be ready in your office!"

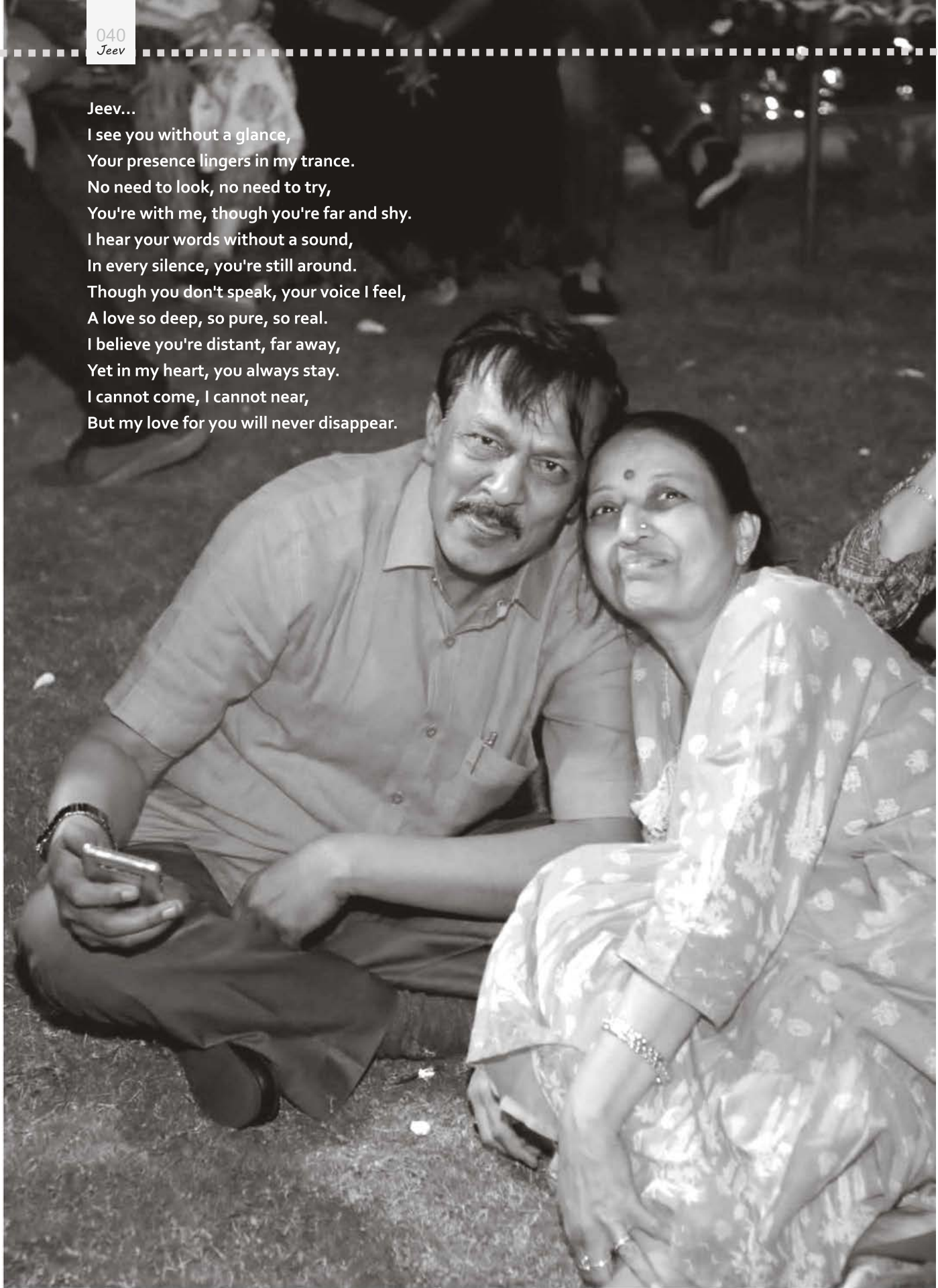
It was the night of April 16, 2022. The next day, Rita and Rajoo were scheduled to leave for Mussoorie early in the morning.

Final Memories : Before leaving for Mussoorie on the morning of April 17, Rita's last selfie with her family at 'Shrutina,' a precious memory froze in time.



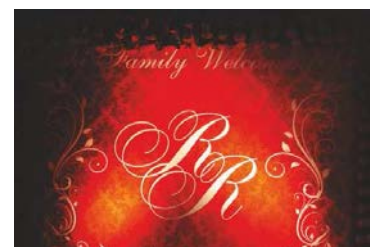
Jeev...

I see you without a glance,
Your presence lingers in my trance.
No need to look, no need to try,
You're with me, though you're far and shy.
I hear your words without a sound,
In every silence, you're still around.
Though you don't speak, your voice I feel,
A love so deep, so pure, so real.
I believe you're distant, far away,
Yet in my heart, you always stay.
I cannot come, I cannot near,
But my love for you will never disappear.



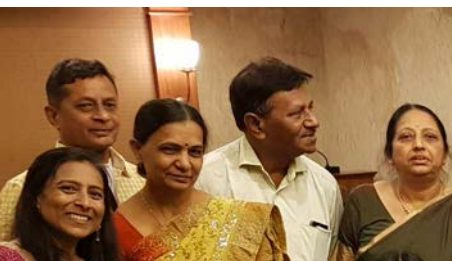


Celebration of Love :
The magnificent celebration
of their 25th Wedding Anniversary,
radiating Rita's happiness and
the bond she shared with Rajoo.

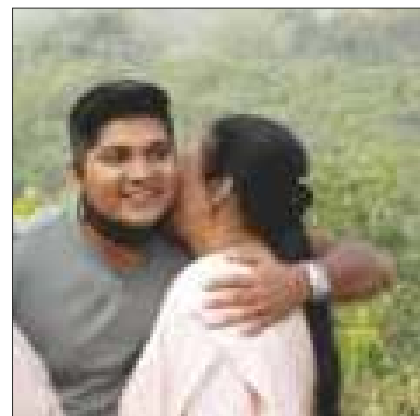


With
Doshi
Family





Family First : Rita, the heart of the Doshi family, cherished by every generation.





Sisterly Bond :
The intimacy among the
three sisters-in-law,
as close as real sisters.



Spiritual Journey : Rajoo and Rita after the darshan of Rameshwar Jyotirlinga, a testament to their shared devotion.







April 17, 2022

Chaitra Vad Ekam, Sunday (first day of the waning moon phase
(Krishna Paksha) in the Hindu month of Chaitra)

On the morning of April 17, 2022,

after the security check at Rajkot airport, Rajoo and Rita along with four other couple friends, reached the lounge, and everyone appeared relaxed. However, a small unease lingered in Rita's mind: Jayu and Anup Modi, as well as Rajesh Gandecha and his wife Pushpa, were not with them.

It was common that, among the six close couple friends, some might be unable to join the trip due to unavoidable reasons. However, today, the absence of Jayu and Anup Modi, and Rajesh and Pushpa, seemed to trouble Rita more than usual. She mentioned this to her husband, Rajoo, in the airport lounge, but before the discussion could go further, Sarla Dekiwadia interrupted with a comment, leaving the conversation about their absence unfinished. As Rita responded to Sarla, she suddenly realized that Sarla and her husband, Rasik (Bhikhu), weren't joining the trip to Mussoorie either. In fact, Rasik's nephew's engagement was scheduled for April 22, and Rajoo had planned the Mussoorie trip from April 17 to 24, 2022. Bhikhu had already mentioned this when Rita called about joining the trip, but her immediate response was, 'Rajoo will figure something out, but you both must come to Mussoorie!'

With love, she addressed her husband, 'Rajbha,' and then explained the issue regarding Bhikha and Sarla. In that moment, Rajoo swiftly arranged a solution. He called Bhikha and informed him that return flight tickets for both of them had been arranged for April 21, so they could attend the engagement.

The Dekiwadia couple quickly rushed to the airport for the Mussoorie trip, now that they realized they could attend the engagement. After the announcement, all five couples boarded the flight from Rajkot to Delhi. As per instructions, their mobile phones were switched to "airplane mode," and Rajoo instinctively thought to call and check on all the children before the flight from Delhi to Dehradun, as was his habit whenever he traveled.

It had become Rajoo's tradition to talk to the children regularly when he was away. That day was particularly important because brother Kishor and his wife Nita were expected to return from Mussoorie to Rajkot the following night. Elder Devyani had also been in Haridwar since April 5, attending a relative's "Bhagwat Saptah" (a weeklong spiritual event). Two days later, on April 20, Utsav and Khushboo were also scheduled to leave for Delhi.



Khushboo, the daughter of Chandrakant, the eldest son of the Doshi family of Manavadar, shares an indirect but profound connection with Rajoo's life. In fact, Khushboo played a significant role in strengthening the bond between Rajoo and his 'jeev' Rita. Although Khushboo was not born when Rita entered Rajoo's life, she became an integral part of their journey, contributing greatly to the happiness of their married life, which truly became a milestone.

"When Shruti became pregnant, Rita's visits to the Doshi family in Manavadar increased as she took on the role of caretaker and companion," recalls Rajoo. The first meeting between Rajoo and Rita had already taken place during the wedding of his brother Chandrakant and Shruti. Rita's lively personality, beautiful face, and rare carefree nature left a lasting impression on Rajoo, who fondly remembers her at that time weighing only 40 kg. During Shruti's pregnancy, Rita would stay for eight to ten days at a time and frequently traveled from Bagasra to Manavadar to be there for her.

It was a period after March 1982, with Khushboo scheduled to be born five months later, on July 24th, 1982. It seemed likely that Rita's visits to Manavadar would become less frequent or even stop altogether. However, the final four months of Shruti's pregnancy played a pivotal role in laying the foundation for a loving and happy married life between Rajoo and Rita, a bond that would last for the next forty years (1982 to 2022). Then, through a seemingly cruel series of events, when Khushboo turned one year and nine months old, her mother Shruti's health continued to deteriorate. As a result, the bond between Khushboo's aunt, Rita, and Rajoo, as well as with the Doshi family, grew even stronger and remained unbroken.

Nature does nothing without a reason, and behind every decision of nature, there's a meaningful purpose (Although it is not seen initially): These are two fundamental beliefs that apply

to everyone's life at some point. Those who have read the book 'Doshi Parivar' are already familiar with this, but I'll reiterate it here to highlight the influence of the almighty. Even before Khushboo's birth, Kishor, the younger brother of Chandrakant, had moved to Bhavnagar to work as a labor officer for the Gujarat government. After Khushboo was born, Shruti's health began to deteriorate, and the entire Doshi family, including Chandrakant, struggled to provide her with the necessary treatment. During this time, only Rajoo remained in Manavadar, and Rita made frequent visits to Manavadar for Khushboo's sake. It was during these visits that the bond between Rajoo and Rita gradually deepened.

Rita had unwavering faith and devotion to Mahadev. She visited the Mahadev temple in Bagasara every day. One day, in a playful tone, she said to Mahadev, "I come to see you every day; why don't you come to my house, Bholanath?" That very day, as she returned home from the temple, a snake deity appeared at the threshold of her house, as if Mahadev had answered her call. Although Rajoo didn't believe in such things, he had complete trust in Rita's faith and the sincerity of her stories throughout his life.

"I only played the 'game' with Rita once and that was because the air was thin due to the altitude in the Kailas Mansarovar (sacred region in Tibet that includes home of lord Shiva, Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar) and it might not have suited Rita's health!" Rajoo says.

In 2016, when Rita expressed her desire to visit Kailash Mansarovar, Rajoo, concerned about the altitude and its potential impact on her health, spoke with the tour organizer, Professor Yashwant Goswami. He urged him to convince Rita to reconsider the journey. Brother Kishor and his wife Neeta had also faced significant challenges during their own trip. Professor Goswami tried to explain the difficulties of the journey to Rita, but as a devoted follower of Mahadev (Lord Shiva), she refused to give up on her dream.

In the end, Rajoo decided to accompany Rita on her journey to Kailash Mansarovar. Elder sister-in-law, Jayu, Anup, Hemant, Ashok, and Jyoti Parmar joined the trip. Rajoo also visited all 12 Jyotirlingas (divine places of Lord Shiva, where he resides in different forms) in India, fulfilling another of Rita's wishes. Rajoo often told Rita, "I don't believe in all of this, but if you ask me to believe and follow you, I will follow you!"

Although Khushboo was not born when Rita entered Rajoo's life, she became an integral part of their journey, contributing greatly to the happiness of their married life, which truly became a milestone.

Jeet
Rita Doshi

"All right, Raj'bha, you walk behind me!" Rita's reply would be: "Mahadeva has inspired me to send you on a pilgrimage to all the Jyotirlingas."



On the Rajkot-Delhi flight on April 17, 2022, Rajoo sat quietly, simply following Rita's wishes. A week earlier, when elder brother-in-law Kishor and his wife Neeta left for Mussoorie on April 11, they suggested to Rita, "You should also visit a cool place like Mussoorie for a few days to escape the heat." Later, Rita shared her desire to go to Mussoorie with Rajoo, who had returned from the factory that evening. Rajoo then made a plan to visit Mussoorie with six of his friends and their spouses from Manavadar. The following day, the flight and hotel bookings were arranged, though there was still some time before their departure on April 17.

"I can't remember the name, but I met someone during that time and mentioned that my mind wasn't really set on going to Mussoorie this time. However, because of Rita's wish, the trip was planned," Rajoo said, removing his glasses to wipe the glare from his eyes. The real reason behind his reluctance was that Rita had altered her diet for a fortnight to address her digestive issues, and it had been very effective. It was crucial for her to stick to that diet, but Rajoo knew it would be difficult to maintain it during the trip. As a result, he had little desire to go to Mussoorie, but he went anyway, in order to fulfill Rita's wish.

On April 18, just the day after returning from Mussoorie, Kishor Doshi's face became swollen for no apparent reason. Utkarsh suddenly noticed dimness in one eye, and Karishma also began experiencing unexplained health problems. Nature seemed to be giving subtle warnings, but none of these issues were known to those who had traveled to Mussoorie. Had Rita known about any of these incidents, she would have cut the trip short and returned to Rajkot the same day!

Before heading to Mussoorie, Rajoo had felt nervous. However, the joy of fulfilling Rita's wish helped ease his anxiety, and their plane finally landed at Delhi airport.

Since there was still some time before the flight to Dehradun, everyone took seats at a restaurant in the airport lounge and began eating from their lunch boxes. "Our trip with Rajoo and Rita had a unique charm!" said Pooja Mehta from Manavadar. "We always brought Thepla (flatbread made with a mix of flour and spices), ganthiya (a popular deep-fried snack from Gujarat), chhundo (Indian pickle), and other items from home to enjoy during our travels!"

"And another thing..." said Manish Mehta, Pooja's husband and Rajoo's friend. "We would only stop for tea where either Rita or I could make it ourselves. Rajoo only drinks tea made by

Rita—or, if not, by me. Once, we were at a place where we couldn't make our own tea, and Rajoo stood up and said, 'Anyone who wants tea can drink it, but I won't drink here'"

Everyone was in a relaxed mood, enjoying their homemade snacks in the Delhi airport lounge, but then the mood shifted. A lady from the restaurant came out and told everyone, including Rita, that they couldn't have breakfast there. This didn't sit well with the Kathiawadi women (from the Kathiawar peninsula in Gujarat, also known as the Saurashtra region). After a brief argument, they made their decision clear to the lady: "We'll eat here, and you can do whatever you want!"

And so, ten people, including Rajoo and Rita, had a "light" lunch together at the same table. At that moment, Manish Mehta and Pooja Mehta reflected on how, thirty-seven years earlier, they had come to Mussoorie for their honeymoon with the same Rajoo and Rita, with whom, now, they were returning to Mussoorie once again.

Back then, everyone had a modest standard of living. Seven people (including the driver) had traveled to Mussoorie in one car from Manavadar, and three couples had stayed in one room. In 2022, the situation changed. Their economic conditions had significantly improved. Everyone now had grey hair, but they were still together, surrounded by the company of their peers...

At that time, no one knew that this trip to Mussoorie would become a life-changing experience they would never forget!



A similar turning point had come in the lives of Rajoo and Rita. Before Khushboo's birth and afterward, Rita used to visit Manavadar from Bagasara for about a year and a half due to Shruti's deteriorating health. During this period, Rajoo and Rita developed a close emotional bond. Of course, the Panchamiya family and the Doshi family were unaware of this at the time. After Khushboo's birth, Rita's visits to Manavadar became less frequent, so Rajoo began traveling to Bagasara to meet her. He would leave Manavadar to visit 'Rajoo Plastic' and often took the State Transport bus to Bagasara in the afternoons. No one at Rita's house was aware that Rajoo and Rita had begun to develop feelings for each other, which is why Rajoo couldn't go to Rita's house. "I had four friends," says Kirti Mrug, Rita's friend from Bagasara. "Hansa, Jayashree, Rashmi, and Pushpa... But no one, except me, knew that

I only played
the 'game' with
Rita once and
that was
because...

Jeev
Rita Doshi

Rajoo was traveling all the way to Bagasara to meet Rita!

Whenever Rajoo reached Bagsara, Rita would meet him at the Bagsara bus depot, accompanied by her friend Kirti. Both of them would tell their families they were just stepping out, so there were no questions or suspicions at home. Rajoo and Rita would meet at the bus depot, either sitting on a chair or in the canteen. Their meetings usually lasted about half an hour, after which Rajoo would take the bus back to Manavadar. Due to the limited transportation options at the time, Rajoo couldn't visit every week, so he would travel to Bagasara every fifteen to twenty days to meet Rita.

In addition to these meetings, they exchanged heartfelt letters. Back then, there were no mobile phones, and neither family could afford a landline. It was an era of love letters. Rajoo would send his letters to Kirti's address, and Kirti would pass them on to Rita, often finding ways to explain or hide them from the other members of the household.

Hansa Gosai, Rita's childhood friend who lived in Bagasara after retiring as a teacher, recalls that during this time, Rajoo once sent a blank audio cassette along with a letter. Rita was supposed to record her voice on the cassette and send it back to Rajoo. Rajoo had even mentioned the song to be recorded: "Phool Tumhen bheja Hai Khat Mein, Phool Nahi Mera Dil Hai..." (Popular old Bollywood song) from the old Bollywood film *Saraswatichandra*, written by Indivar.

In the early 1980s, tape recorders were a luxury, and not everyone had one. However, after some effort, Rita managed to record the song on a cassette using a tape recorder borrowed from a resident of Bagasara. Whether it was Hansa Gosai, Kirti Mrug, or their other friends like Jayashree and Rashmi, all of them would gather at the Panchamiya family home, sit together, and play a game of 'Dhingli Potiya' (a traditional old-time game from Gujarat). Hansa recalls three specific occasions when Rajoo and Rita's love was profoundly evident, and she can't help but mention them. One Diwali, Rita bought a Diwali greeting card to send to Rajoo from Bagasara. In Manavadar, Rajoo also bought a card to send to Rita. When they exchanged their cards, they realized that both cards, bought from different shops in different villages at different times, were exactly the same!

At that time, love letters were the only means of communication, and everyone was crazy about them. Once, Rajoo sent a beautifully painted card through the courier, but it was never delivered. Later, Rajoo had a photo of the card printed and hand-delivered it to Rita through a friend. Rajoo once sent a love letter in such a way that the postman delivered it only when he and Rita were busy with the *hasta melap* (traditional ceremony during Gujarati wedding) on their wedding stage. Rajoo mentioned this only after reaching the wedding stage. As a result, Hansa

had to leave the wedding ceremony discreetly and go to the gate of the Panchamiya house to collect the love letter from the postman, without anyone noticing.

Undoubtedly, until 1984, neither the Panchamiya family nor the Doshi family knew that their youngest son or youngest daughter had already taken a special place in each other's heart.

After Khushboo's birth, both families were concerned about Shruti's deteriorating health. When Khushboo was only a year and nine months old, Shruti passed away, leaving everyone shocked. Little Khushboo's mother was no more, and this added to the worry in the Panchamiya family. The Doshi family, who had lost their elder daughter-in-law, was also concerned and involved in taking care of Khushboo and sharing the trauma with their elder son.

"Once, we asked Chandrakant Doshi that..." Rita's brother-in-law (Rita's Sister's husband), Chandrakant Doshi (Both of them have the same name), says: "...Chandu, what do you think about our Rita? If you say yes, Bittu (Khushboo) will find a mother in Rita!"

"I have always seen Rita as a daughter!" Chandrakant Doshi expressly told another Chandrakant Doshi (Ila's husband). This was the answer given at the time. Rita's elder sister, Ila, says, "We never told anyone about what we discussed with Chandu for Rita. We kept it to ourselves, because only after Chandu's suggestion, we decided to get Rita engaged to Rajoo!"

The Panchamiya and Doshi families decided to get Rajoo and Rita engaged, though no one knew that both Rajoo and Rita also wanted the same. A year later, on November 29, 1985, Rajoo and Rita were married in a simple ceremony. Ten people, including the groom, travelled to the wedding place in two Ambassador cars, and eleven people returned. The total cost of the wedding was only three thousand six hundred rupees. Manish Mehta, who attended the wedding with his wife, Pooja, later accompanied Rajoo and Rita on their honeymoon to Mussoorie.

"In the presence of everyone, I used to call her Ritabhabhi, but when we were alone, I would call her 'Rita,' and she would call me 'Jayli!'"

These words from Rajoo's younger sister, Jayu Modi, reveal that her friendship with Rita was older than a 'Bhabhipana' (the relationship between a sister-in-law and her husband's sister). Jayu still remembers that after Shruti's marriage (who was older than Rita) was arranged with Chandrakant, jayu began visiting Shruti's house in Manavadar. It was during this time that a strong

Rajoo and Rita
would meet at
the bus depot,
either sitting on
a chair or in the
canteen.

friendship blossomed between her and Rita. During the same period, from April 28 to May 5, 1981, when Moraribapu's Ramkatha (the recitation and interpretation of the story of Lord Rama from the Ramayana by Gujarati spiritual leader Morari Bapu) was held in the city of Kutiana, Rita and Jayu, along with one of their other friends, attended the Ramkatha for eight days. Jayu recalls, "During those eight days, we grew closer to one another. Rita was a devoted follower of Mahadev, a faith she inherited from her father. Rita's father, Hari Panchamiya, also had unwavering devotion to Mahadev.

It was the year 1982. Neither Rajoo Doshi nor Jayu Modi knew how nature was planning to shape their lives and what relationships were about to form. Perhaps the entire Doshi family was unaware that the younger sister of their eldest daughter-in-law, Shruti, would eventually become an integral part of the Doshi family's close-knit identity!

Jayu fondly remembers, "After our mother, Mrs. Champa, passed away in 2006, I used to tell Rita that, even though Mom was no longer with us, she had sent me your helpline number. Rita was not just my friend and sister; she was like a mother to me, taking care of our whole family with a mother's love!"

"I would say that Rita is even better than Gunasundari, the woman of exceptional qualities from the novel Saraswatichandra, because Rita embodies superior values, a strong family spirit, kindness, generosity, and compassion. She has a deep sense of spirituality, is caring and supportive of others, affectionate, trustworthy, and loving," says Jyoti Vachhani, the former Mayor of the neighboring town, Junagadh. Jyoti, her husband Mr. Vitthal, and their children, all deeply moved by Rita's hospitality, love, and affection, say, 'No matter how much praise we give Rita, our own personalities pale in comparison to hers.'

"I will always call Rita 'Virbaima!'" says Shapar's industrialist, Hari Dobriya, drawing a quick analogy. "Just as Virbaima (Wife of Jalaram Bapa) supported Jalaram Bapa (Hindu saint from Gujarat, India.), Rita supported Rajoo."

One afternoon, Hari was sitting with Rajoo in the office of 'Rajoo Engineers' when Rita called from home, asking, "Have you eaten yet?" When Rajoo replied, "No," Rita immediately spoke to Hari Dobriya on the phone and insisted, "You and Rajoo must eat first; don't leave without having a meal!"

Hari Dobariya's faith in Rita had a solid reason behind it. After her insistence, he performed the Pitrukarya (fatherhood rituals), which helped him, and his family overcome a financial crisis. Initially, Hari Dobriya was introduced to Rajoo Doshi as a customer of 'Rajoo Engineers,' but their relationship soon blossomed into much deeper family ties. The Doshi family, however, is not

limited to just professional or transactional relationships. The spirit of being useful to others runs deep in their DNA.

Rajeev Mehta from Junagadh, who was involved in CCTV work, came into contact with the Doshi family. During a Ganesh festival, when Rita invited Rajeev and his wife Moksha, she discovered that despite being a Nagar (a caste), Moksha observed "Atthai" (no food for a continuous 8 days, only boiled water) like a Jain. Rita, a devout follower of Mahadev, had a deep respect for every religion and its rituals. With her strong insistence, Rita persuaded Moksha to share the benefits of her Parna (breaking the fast- ritual) with the Doshi family. This was organized with great fanfare in the Shrutina tradition. Moksha, who had witnessed Rita's deep faith, remarked, "Although Rita did not wear saffron, her soul took refuge in saffron!" (saffron is considered a sacred and auspicious color in Hinduism and has a deep spiritual significance, The color is worn by Hindu saints)

"To tell the truth," Says Jayu Modi, "there were two key people in our Doshi family, both very alive and sensitive! One was our elder brother, Chandrakant, and the other was Rita. Everything seemed to pulse with their presence, but..." Anup Modi says, "The constant regret was that we couldn't go to Mussoorie with Rita and Rajoo because of my uncle's Ayambil Parna (a type of Jain religious and spiritual practice that involves austerity and fasting, primarily focusing on controlling the taste buds)". When Anup Modi expressed his inability to join them, he still had Rajoo Doshi's WhatsApp message urging him to come along. Rajoo had written in the message, "Life is uncertain. Why are you refusing? (Come with us.)"

As we read this message, reflecting on the harsh reality of life, no one realized that there would never be another opportunity to travel with Rita Doshi again.



A travel tempo carrying four couples, including Rita and Rajoo Doshi, entered Mussoorie, lifting everyone's spirits. There was no discomfort or worry, as Rajoo had made all the arrangements in advance to ensure that Rita and everyone else could enjoy the trip without stress or boredom. Everyone was aware of Rajoo's thoughtfulness. They arrived at Dehradun after a half-hour flight from Rajkot to Delhi, followed by another half-hour to Dehradun. With the travel tempo waiting outside Dehradun airport, the group immediately set off for Mussoorie. However, there was

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Jeev
Rita Doshi

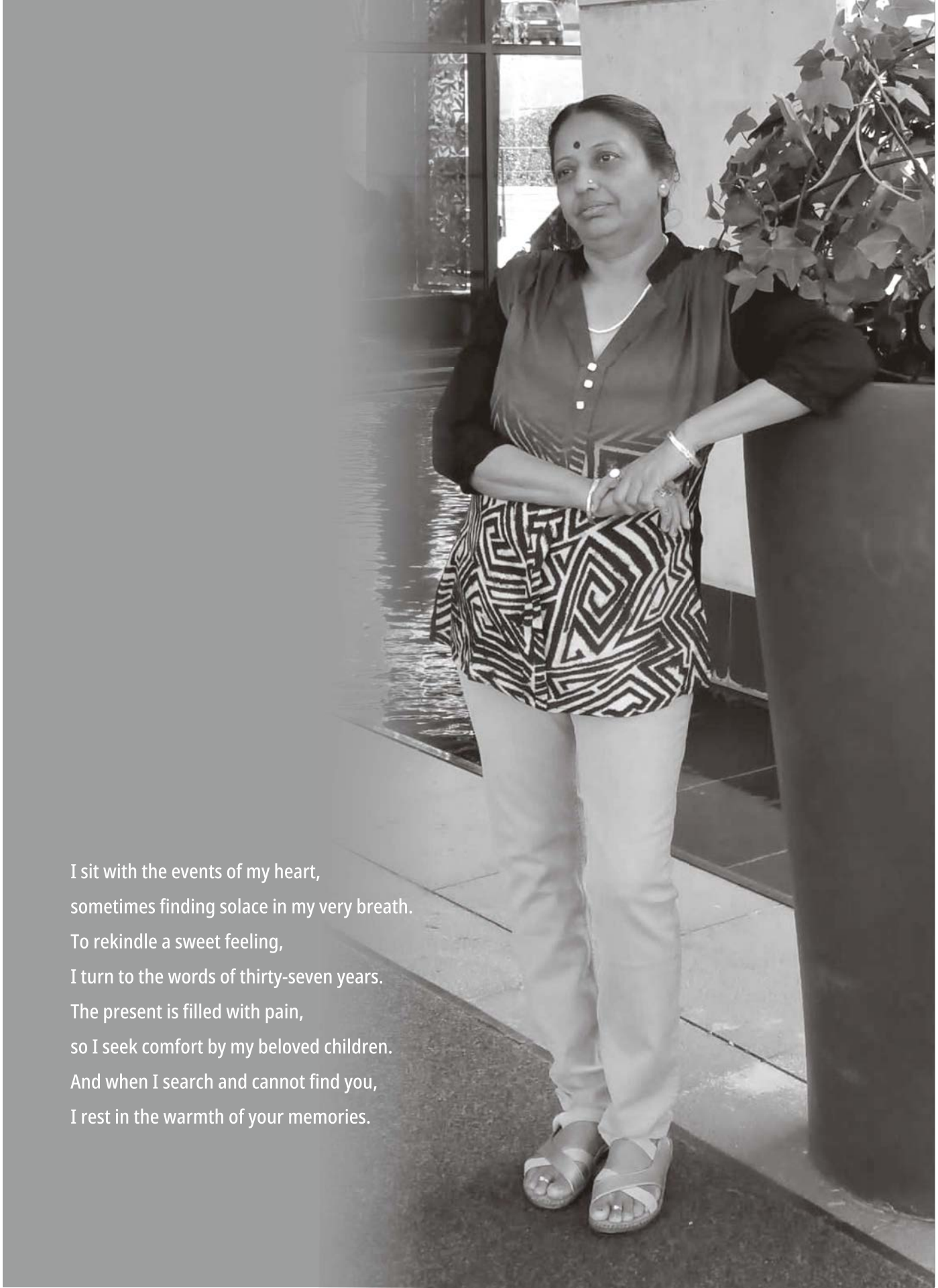
one wish among them...

"As you asked, let me tell you that most of the time, the seven couples travel together, but none of us are in the habit of drinking alcohol!" said Rajesh Gandechea, a Rajkot-based friend of Rajoo Doshi (originally from Manavadar). His wife, Pushpa, added, "We just have a habit of drinking tea made by Rita!"

It was because of this craving for Rita's tea that they stopped at a small shop called 'Krishna Maggi Point' along the way. Tea was brewed on the shop's gas stove, and the snacks brought from home were served alongside it. At that moment, Rajoo noticed eight to ten young men in the back of the shop, consuming intoxicants. However, ...

Sensing the wisdom in overlooking such activities in an unfamiliar place, Rajoo boarded the travel tempo with Rita and their friends, continuing their journey.

When the tempo arrived at Mussoorie's historic Hotel Padmini Niwas, everyone was in awe of the hotel, and Rita was no exception!



I sit with the events of my heart,
sometimes finding solace in my very breath.
To rekindle a sweet feeling,
I turn to the words of thirty-seven years.
The present is filled with pain,
so I seek comfort by my beloved children.
And when I search and cannot find you,
I rest in the warmth of your memories.



April 18, 2022

Chaitra Vad Bija, Monday

(Chaitra is the first month in the Hindu calendar, and "Vad Bija" (or Krishna Dwitiya) is the second day of the waning moon phase (Krishna Paksha) in that month)

April 18, 2022.

That morning, from the window of the luxurious room at Hotel Padmini Niwas, Rajoo Doshi gazed at the lush green scenery of Mussoorie, his eyes captivated by its beauty. Suddenly, his attention shifted to Rita, who was effortlessly getting ready and freshening up. Rita, however, seemed entirely absorbed in her own routine. Rajoo felt a sense of relief. It had been over thirty-six hours since they left Rajkot, and Rita had not experienced the gastric troubles that had plagued her just two days earlier.

On the morning of April 16th, Rajoo was preparing to head to the office. It was their daily routine that after Rita worshipped Mahadev, the couple would always take a selfie at the entrance of the Shrutina temple. They usually coordinated their outfits, with Rita in a saree and Rajoo in a shirt, often in matching colors. That day, for some unknown reason, Rita prayed to Mahadev with immense faith and devotion. She had been suffering from severe flatulence, which caused excruciating stomach and chest pains at unpredictable times. The only relief she found was after vomiting. Just the previous day, on April 15th, she had endured another episode of intense pain and had vomited profusely. Despite this, they were set to leave for Mussoorie in two days—a trip Rajoo had planned solely because it was Rita's wish. Rita, however, was anxious, fearing that her gastric issues might flare up again during the journey.

"Raj'bha, today I told Bholenath (Mahadev/Lord Shiva) something..." Rita said frantically,

"Either cure my gastric pain or call me to you!"

Hearing such words from Rita that evening, Rajoo didn't respond. He could feel the unbreakable, immense faith and trust between Rita and Mahadev. For him, her words reflected the loving anticipation and anger one might feel between a father (Mahadev) and daughter (Rita).

This memory was now vivid in Rajoo Doshi's mind as he stood in Mussoorie, though there was no particular reason for it. To distract himself from these thoughts, he called a friend in another room and asked, "Jaymin, did you and Rekha have breakfast yet?"



"Jaymin is my brother-in-law, but..." Rita would often say, "He is both my brother and my friend!"

"Rita loves me like a son!" Jaymin Goswami would say, his voice filled with emotion. The five friends who could be called Rajoo Doshi's best friends were Hasmukh Manavadaria, Rasik (Bhikha) Dekiwadia, Manish Mehta, and Rajesh Gandecha. All four were natives of Manavadar and Rajoo's friends since school days. But Jaymin Goswami, originally from Visavadar, had come to Manavadar only to study for a year in the eleventh grade. The friendship formed during that year remains strong and intimate even fifty years later.

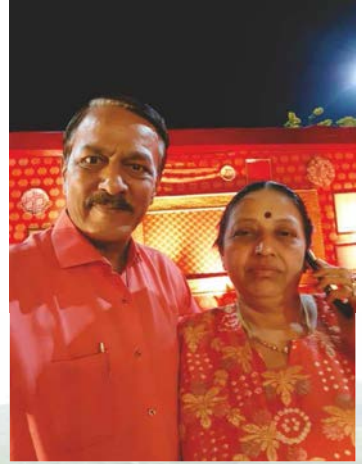
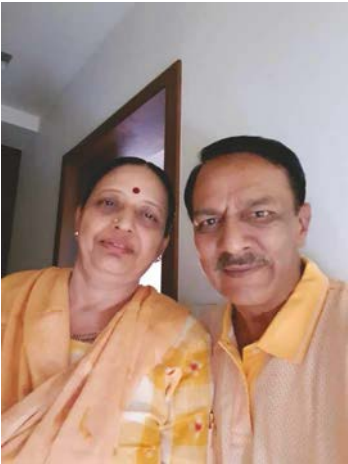
What an intimacy they shared!

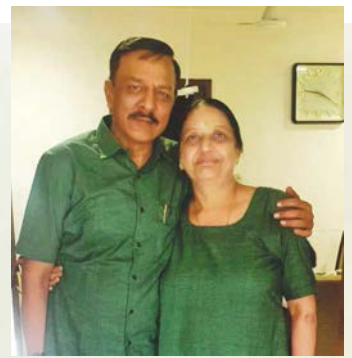
"In May 2017, I had to have one of my kidneys removed, and I had to rest in bed for a month!" Jaymin recalls. He clearly remembers that in July 2017, he received a call from Rita: "We are going to visit Rameshwar Jyotirlinga..."

As Jaymin expressed his concerns about the surgery, Rita exclaimed, "To ensure your surgery's success, I had made a vow to visit the Rameshwar Jyotirlinga!"

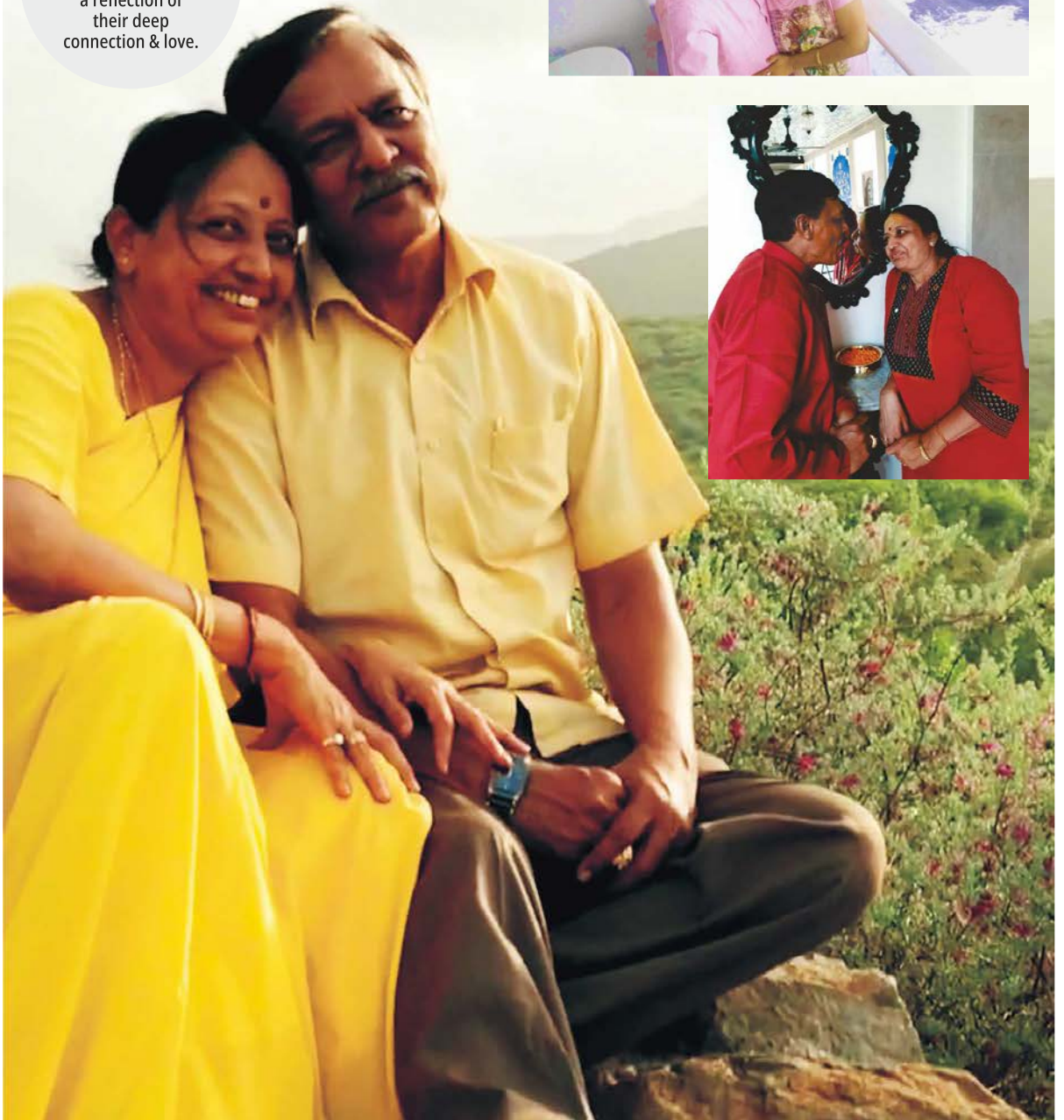
"Rita has never made any of us feel like we are just Rajoo's friends," says Rajesh Gandecha. This sentiment is echoed by all of his friends and their spouses. "The moment you meet Rita; you instantly feel like she is 'one of us.'" Rita treated everyone with the same warmth and closeness, making them feel valued and included. Her dearest friend, Bhavna Patel (wife of Rajoo Vasani), once remarked, "If you mention something you like in front of her, it will be at your doorstep the very next day!" That was the essence of Rajoo and Rita—generous, thoughtful, and deeply caring.

Bhavna Patel, the daughter-in-law of the Turbo Group, who lived opposite Shrutina bungalow, once visited Rita and noticed boxes of mangoes in the compound. Curious, she asked, "Where did you order these mangoes, sister-in-law?" The next day, two boxes of mangoes were



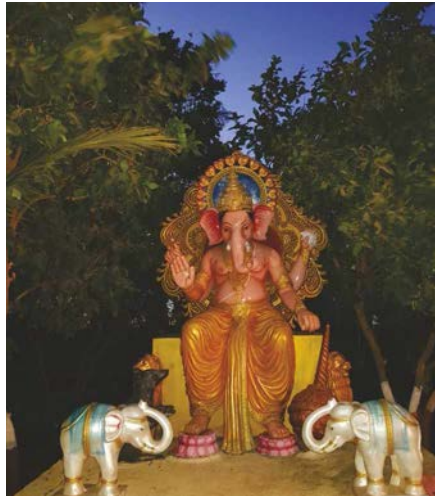


Love in
Harmony :
Their matching
dress codes,
a reflection of
their deep
connection & love.





Creative Touch :
Rita's Wadi, beautifully
decorated by her,
a space filled with her
warmth and creativity.







Rita - at 'Rita's Wadi'



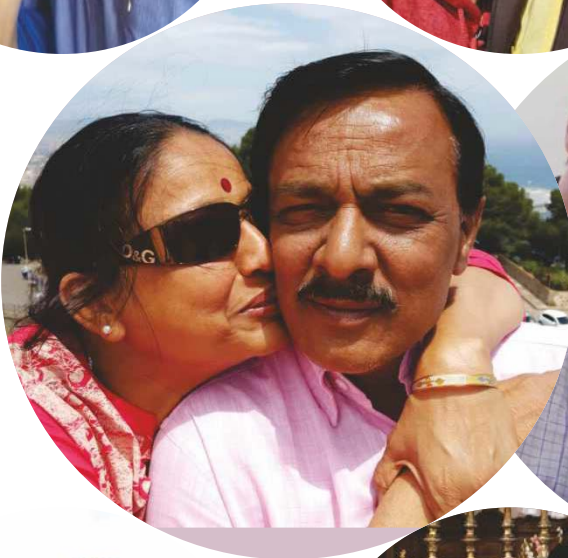
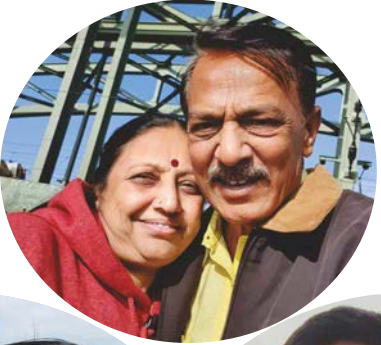
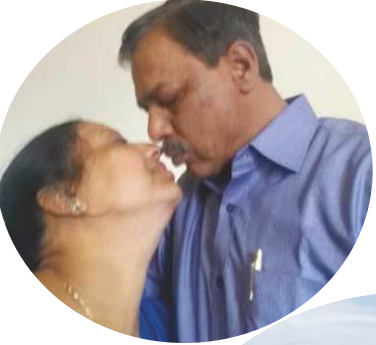


Unconditional Care :
Preparing tea for Rajoo,
even during overseas travels,





Hobby :
Rita's love for cooking-
ready to cook even at midnight.



delivered to Bhavna's house. Bhavna Patel, along with Sona Shah, Paras Buddhadev, and Hari Dobriya, had known Rita for only about seven years. When the Doshi family began organizing Ganapati festivals in their area in 2015, at their own expense, it was during this time that Bhavna grew closer to Rita. Over time, their bond grew so strong that they started walking together regularly. Bhavna recalls, "But Rita never seemed sad. Even if she had a gastric issue, she would talk about it with a smile. She always said she would tell Bholanath in the morning when she poured water, so she could feel relaxed and unburdened."

On the evening of April 16th, Bhavna went to Shrutina bungalow to give an invitation. At that time, Rita was performing the "Agnihotra Havan (a Vedic ritual where offerings are made to a sacred fire signifying a symbolic act of purification and exchange with the divine energy of fire)" She insisted that Bhavna stay for ten minutes, but...

"I refused to stay because I had to go to another place to deliver an invitation!" Bhavna remembers. "I told Rita that I was in a hurry and would come back tomorrow to sit with her."

"...But tomorrow we are going to Mussoorie!" Rita said. "Sit down, I'll come immediately."

Sister-in-law, it will be really late! It's my in-laws' dinner time," Bhavna replied. "I'll come after you return from Mussoorie, and we can meet and talk about the trip then."

"Bhavna, unable to understand the deeper meaning behind Rita's insistence, says, "I never had that final meeting with Rita, and that's something I will regret for the rest of my life."

We had left the matter of Rita's vow for Jaymin Goswami unfinished. Both Jaymin and his wife, Rekha, were deeply moved to learn that unbeknownst to them, Rita had taken a vow to visit the Rameshwar Jyotirlinga in South India for their sake. Eventually, they too decided to visit Rameshwar, and all five couples, along with Rajoo and Rita Doshi, went on the journey together. And there...

After the darshan (auspicious sight of a deity or holy person) of Mahadev, Rita expressed her desire to visit all twelve Jyotirlingas in India (besides Rameshwar, Bhimashankar, Trimbakeshwar, Adi Nagnath, Parli Baidyanath, Mallikarjuna, Kashi Vishwanath, Omkareshwar, Mahakaleshwar, Somnath, and Kedarnath). Rajoo, who was not only Rita's husband but also her Aashik-Patidev (devoted husband), could not rest peacefully until her wishes were fulfilled. Ensuring fulfillment of Rita's desires was

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Rita said
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Jeev
Rita Doshi

the lifelong mission of Rajoo's life. It was in Rameshwar that he shared his plan with friends to take Rita for the darshan of all twelve Jyotirlingas. Witnessing such profound love and devotion for his wife, everyone expressed their joy and admiration. However,...

"Rajoo was absolutely unwavering in his determination!" recalls Jaymin Goswami. "At Rameshwar itself, Rajoo made all of us—the five friends and their wives—take an oath that we would visit the twelve Jyotirlingas together. He insisted that it was mandatory for every single one of us to be present for each darshan (auspicious sight of a deity or holy person)!"

In July 2017, at the sacred land of Rameshwar, Rajoo Doshi made a decision with such devotion and urgency to fulfill Rita's wish that by the time the coronavirus pandemic shook the world in March 2020, he had already taken Rita—along with five other couples from their circle of friends—to visit the darshan of ten other Jyotirlingas. The darshan of the twelfth Jyotirlinga, Kedarnathji, was completed by everyone in October 2021, after the government eased lockdown and COVID-19 restrictions. As per the vow taken in Rameshwar, all the friends, including Rajoo and Rita, were present for the darshan of all the Jyotirlingas. However, due to bad weather at Kedarnath, Bhikhu (Rasik) Dekiwadia, his wife, and four others got stuck there. Naturally, everyone at Base (Sitapur) was very worried, but Bhikha says, "When it came to worry and offering help, Rita was superior to Rajoo."

Bhikhu recalls an incident that occurred during the preparations for his daughter's marriage. He called their mutual friend, Rajesh Gandeche, asking him to get one hundred fifty to two hundred thousand rupees ready as a precautionary measure. He shared the details over the phone, and Rajesh responded warmly. The next day, at around three o'clock in the afternoon, Bhikha went to open his shop, 'Sagar Watch,' and was surprised to find Rajoo Doshi sitting in the car with the AC on. Bhikha says, "I was a little surprised. Rajoo and Rita used to meet two or three times a week, but mostly at night. We would meet for a soda and then sit and talk for about half an hour in a public place. Sometimes, if we called other friends, we would have a casual get-together on the road!"

"... But seeing Rajoo at lunchtime made me feel a bit awkward." The beaming Bhikha went to Rajoo Doshi's car, and Rajoo handed him a bundle wrapped in paper, saying, "Keep this..."

Rajoo then left without giving Bhikha a chance to ask further questions.

Bhikha believed that if anyone came to collect the packet (or bundle), he would hand it over. However, no one arrived by evening, so Bhikha decided to check its contents. To his surprise, there was cash inside. Seeing the amount, Bhikha assumed that Rajoo had given him the money

for his daughter's marriage. But...

How did Rajoo know that the money was needed? Two days later, the matter became clear. When Bhikha called Rajesh Gandechea to ask for the money, Rajesh happened to be sitting in front of Rita at the Shrutina bungalow. As Rita overheard the conversation, she inquired about it, and Rajesh casually explained the situation to her. Later that night, Rita informed Rajoo Doshi about the incident.

Although Bhikha affectionately calls her Rita Bhabhi, he recalls, "Just a few months ago, she told me, 'You are like my brother, so you must take me to Mathura for the ritual bath on Bhai Beej. (On Bhai Beej, the festival celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters, siblings take a holy dip in the Yamuna River together, and the sister prays for her brother's long life.) Please don't forget that!'

Undoubtedly, Bhikha would never see such a Beej again!



The evening in Mussoorie was very cozy for everyone because...

"We didn't even go out that day!" says Manish Mehta. "Everyone relaxed in the delightful atmosphere of Mussoorie, then sat together in the hotel garden and chatted!"

Hotel Padmini Niwas, a luxurious and historic landmark in Mussoorie, stands as a testament to the area's rich history. The building, where Rajoo and Rita Doshi stayed with a couple of friends, was originally constructed in 1830 by Mrs. N. Ross. It later came into the possession of an Australian, then a Britisher, who sold it to Maharaja Vijaysinhji Chhatrasinhji of Rajpipla in 1925. The Maharaja renamed it 'Padmini Niwas' in honor of his second queen, Padmini Kunwarba, a princess from the Panna state. In 1964, Padmini Kunwarba sold the property, and in 1979, it was transformed into a hotel, retaining the name 'Padmini Niwas.'

While staying at the nearly 43-year-old 'Padmini Niwas,' Rajoo Doshi habitually flipped through the hotel's literature and discovered that some of the hotel's furniture and rare items had been preserved in the same condition as when the building was first constructed...

At Rameshwar
itself, Rajoo
made all of us -
the five friends
and their wives
- take an oath
that we would
visit the twelve
Jyotirlingas
together.

Jeev
Rita Doshi

Seeing such antiques and home furnishings, Rajoo thought, "I need to write a travelogue..." Rajoo and Rita had embarked on many memorable trips, both within India and abroad, often accompanied by their close friends and the Doshi family, creating countless cherished memories along the way. During their trip to Ladakh, they took all the children from the Doshi family with them. One night, at eleven o'clock, the hotel manager approached them with a complaint—the children had opened the restaurant and demanded non-vegetarian food!

Without a moment's hesitation, Rajoo slapped the manager across the cheek, certain that his family would never make such a request. There was no need for further explanation or questioning. When the family visited Switzerland, Rajoo instructed the hotel management at check-in, "If there is any damage to the hotel or our room, provide a bill, but my children should not be stopped or scolded!" he insisted. During that tour, Rajoo had made such meticulous arrangements that, from the moment they landed at the airport until they returned after completing the tour, no one had to walk even a step. He had arranged for a luxury bus, hired from outside the Swiss airport, to be ready and waiting for them throughout their journey.

Even when he embarked on the pilgrimage to Kailas Mansarovar, solely because of Rita's wish, he made sure that Rita wouldn't face any hardships, even the slightest. Upon entering the Chinese border for Kailas Mansarovar, Yashwant Goswami arranged a common vehicle for everyone on the tour. However, Rajoo insisted on a separate vehicle for Rita. Rajoo explains, "I insisted on a separate vehicle so that if any of the eight people on the tour experienced health issues due to the high altitude, I could immediately take them down without waiting for the rest of the group to reach the destination."

At the time, Yashwant Goswami, the organizer, was hesitant because the cost of a separate vehicle was exceptionally high. However, he was unaware of Rajoo's deep affection and chivalrous nature. Without a second thought, Rajoo hired an exclusive vehicle for Rita at the cost of three thousand dollars, ensuring that her dream of visiting Kailash Mansarovar was fulfilled without the slightest disturbance or delay.

While reminiscing about the fond memories of many past journeys at the 'Padmini Niwas' hotel in Mussoorie, a thought occurred to Rajoo: although he couldn't write about all their previous trips, this particular journey to Mussoorie had to be documented.

What could have caused such a thought to arise in his mind? Knowing that this was Rajoo's last journey with Rita, perhaps the Almighty, Mahadev, had planted this thought in Rajoo's mind!



“Once you meet Rita, you feel as though she belongs to your family!” says Chaya Rawal, the wife of retired police officer Vashisht Rawal. “Her ability to make everyone feel like they were her own and to care for them so deeply was simply extraordinary!”

Chaya and Vashisht first met Rita in 2014. At the time, Vashisht's ninety-five-year-old mother had been diagnosed with cancer, and the doctors had given her only a short time to live. The Rawal couple had heard that Rajoo Doshi was treating people with alternative medicine, so they decided to visit the Shrutina bungalow (unannounced). Naturally, Rita was at home. When the Rawals explained their situation and were served tea, Rita calmly said, “Let Rajoo come...”

“The doctor told us to count the days...” says Vashisht Rawal. “After Rajoo's treatment, my mother lived for another two and a half years and even danced at a family wedding!”

This was just the beginning of their journey with Rajoo and Rita, but soon, the Rawals became so close to them that it felt like a family bond. The Rawals traveled with them to many places, including Lavasa, and even volunteered to serve at Rajoo's "hospital." Hari Dobariya, an industrialist who came for treatment for his hand pain, witnessed firsthand how Rita personally prepared doses of alternative medicine at the hospital. Using his knowledge of alternative medicine and his financial resources, Rajoo ran the dispensary every evening after returning from the factory, offering selfless service to suffering patients. He would stay until the last patient had received the necessary medication and guidance, and Rita remained by his side throughout. She never showed any sign of embarrassment or boredom; instead, she served the patients with the utmost care and compassion. Vashisht Rawal recalls a leprosy patient who would come alone, without any family members. Rita would clean his bleeding wounds and dress them herself. Initially, the patient arrived in an auto-rickshaw, but later he started coming on a bicycle. However, every time he entered the dispensary, he would call out loudly, “Where has my mother gone?” “Ma” (Mother) was how everyone affectionately referred to Rita. An elderly patient even called her his daughter, as she showered everyone with both motherly caresses and daughterly affection. Pooja Singh, who worked at “Rajoo Engineers,” had once lived in the Rawal couple's apartment. One day, when Rita visited the Rawal home and met Pooja, who was returning from the office, she insisted that Pooja stop going to work

Without a moment's hesitation, Rajoo slapped the manager across the cheek, certain that his family would never

and rest, as she was in her seventh month of pregnancy.

"When Pooja gave birth to her baby, Rita brought three sacks full of clothes for her!" says Chhaya Rawal. "She kept telling Pooja, 'Leave your daughter with us. 'We'll take care of her!'"

"You won't find compassion like hers anywhere else!" says Pooja Mehta, whom Rita considered a younger sister. This was not an isolated incident; there were countless examples of her kindness. When the five family members of professor-organizer Yashwant Goswami, who had recently returned from the pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar, contracted COVID-19, they were all isolated in separate rooms as per safety guidelines. Out of fear, no one dared to step foot into their house. However, Rita, Rajoo Doshi, Kishor, and Nita made sure to deliver tiffin meals to the entire family every day. Similarly, when Sona and Samir Shah's household faced a shortage of green coconuts while Sona was battling COVID-19, the Doshi couple personally went to their home with tender coconuts to help.

"Rajoo and Rita seem like a pair of 'Shiva-Parvati' to me!" says Yashwant Goswami, a Shiva-worshiper like Rita. He elaborates, "Shiva symbolizes the doer of good, and Parvati symbolizes the inspiration for good deeds. Rajoo's nature is completely sensitive, but he does not listen or surrender to anyone. He surrenders only to Rita! It is also my observation that Rajoo and Rita were completely devoted to each other!"

Rajoo's younger sister, Jayu Modi, proves this with an incident. If Rita came from home to the factory to go to the wadi in the lap of the Girnar mountains, and Rajoo canceled the trip due to his busy schedule, Rita's face would never show the slightest unhappiness. She would walk back home with a smile on her face, accompanied by the driver. Once, Rita and Jayu were returning from the wadi during the rain when they stopped by the factory. Rita said to Rajoo at the office, "We should have stopped at the wadi. It would have been so much more fun in this rainy weather!"

Rajoo immediately sensed her longing and urgently sent everyone back to the wadi insisting, "You go ahead, and I will join you in the evening!"



Later, after a lively dinner with friends and lots of gossip, Rita casually mentioned, "Raj'bha, plan to go somewhere tomorrow!" To which Rajoo, with a cheerful smile, immediately replied, "Yes, let's do it!"

However, after giving a warm response, Rajoo Doshi remembered that if they made such a plan, Rita would have to face stress due to the arrangements. The previous day (the 17th), after checking in at the reception of Hotel Padmini Niwas, he realized that they would need to climb a

staircase to reach their room, which was located at the best spot. Wouldn't this cause hardship and discomfort for Rita? He had immediately ordered a car at the reception, which dropped the women, including Rita, at the high-rise room.

"Would you really like to go out, or just stay here comfortably like today?" Rajoo asked Rita, offering her a chance to reconsider, without mentioning her health. But Rita was clear: "Yes, yes, we have to go, and we will go for sure!"

Of course, the real reason, which she later whispered softly, was: "I don't like everyone staying here in the hotel just because of me, Raj'bha."

Rajoo said nothing after realizing that Rita wasn't thinking about herself, but rather about the friends and their wives who had come along. He simply smiled warmly at Rita, understanding the depth of her care and selflessness.

I don't like
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April 19, 2022

Chaitra Sud Third, Tuesday

(third day of the waxing moon phase (Shukla Paksha) in the Hindu month of Chaitra)

April 19, 2022.

Technically, this was the third day of Rita and Rajoo Doshi's trip to Mussoorie, along with their close circle of friends. However, they had only spent two nights in this picturesque and enchanting city so far. According to their planned itinerary, they were supposed to leave Mussoorie on the morning of April 24, after a five-night stay, and return via flights from Dehradun to Delhi, and finally to Rajkot. But...

This time, the excitement and joy on Rita Doshi's face seemed different from their previous trips. Rajoo Doshi could sense it, but he chose not to bring it up because...

He had organized this trip to Mussoorie specifically to fulfill Rita's wish, so he didn't think it was appropriate to voice his concerns on the morning of the 19th. However, that morning, while he was in the bathroom, an unexpected thought crossed his mind—after returning to Rajkot, he should undergo a Mundan (head-shaving ceremony). When he finished and shared the idea with Rita, she immediately responded, “Why do you need to shave your head? Do it after I'm gone!”

That night, as they prepared for bed, Rajoo had already planned the following day. After breakfast, he would take everyone to Mussoorie's famous Mall Road market. He avoided visiting other popular tourist spots in Mussoorie, as many of them required walking, which could be tiring...

In recent months, Rita had been feeling overexerted and experiencing gastric distress

whenever she walked too much, whether intentionally or unintentionally. So, instead of exploring such places, Rajoo decided to take the group to the market. Shopping, whether needed or not, was a favorite pastime for the women in the group, and the Doshi group included four women besides Rita. Rita, in particular, was always eager to buy souvenirs for her family members rather than for herself. On every trip, she would pick up something for her children, her two sisters-in-law, her real sisters (whom she met often), and her childhood friends from Rajkot and Bagsara. Once back in Rajkot, she would personally deliver these regional specialties to her loved ones. Both Rajoo and Rita shared a deep joy in giving, making it a cherished part of their nature.

During the Kailas-Mansarovar Yatra, Rajoo Doshi wore a gold-plated rudraksha (dried stones of the fruit of the *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* tree, used as prayer chain, wearer is protected by Loar Shiva) necklace around his neck. It looked impressive and was eye-catching. When the journey ended and the Sherpas(people living on the borders of Nepal and Tibet, renowned for mountaineering) parted ways at the India-China border, an Indian guide living in Tibet noticed the gold rudraksha chain around Rajoo's neck. He touched it and said, "It's a nice chain. I really like it." Without hesitation, Rajoo removed the necklace and gave it to the guide.

Yashwant Goswami, the trip's organizer, who had been watching the scene from a distance, scolded Rajoo for giving away such a valuable gift. Rajoo's reply was simple: "This was Rita's Mahadev's order, so I gave it!"

At that moment, Rita was also happy with Rajoo's generosity. When their friends, Bhikha and Jaymin Goswami, heard the story, they also praised the impressive chain. Upon returning to Rajkot, Rajoo and Rita gifted both of them a similar gold rudraksha chain.

Rajoo Doshi also gifted a similar gold-plated rudraksha necklace to Mukesh Hirpara, a family friend from Junagadh. However, Mukesh recalls another memorable experience with Rajoo and Rita Doshi. He had accompanied the Doshi couple on a luxurious Seven Star cruise journey from Barcelona, Spain, to Italy. Before boarding, Rajoo had purchased a selfie stick in Spain to capture group photos during their trip. As Rajoo stepped onto the cruise, holding the selfie stick, the crew members-dressed in vibrant, colorful uniforms-greeted him with warm, welcoming smiles. After their cheerful reception, one of the crew members noticed the selfie stick in Rajoo's hand and, with a playful grin, remarked, "Nice stick, sir!"

Without a moment's hesitation, Rajoo, known for his boundless generosity, smiled and replied, "It's yours now!" He handed the selfie stick to the crew member, who was visibly surprised yet deeply touched by Rajoo's spontaneous act of kindness. Mukesh Hirpara, who witnessed the

entire incident, fondly recalls, "Rita, who had been observing the interaction, gave Rajoo an approving smile and a thumb-up, clearly delighted by his selfless gesture!" It was a small yet profoundly meaningful moment, one that perfectly encapsulated the warmth and generosity that defined both Rajoo and Rita Doshi.

Rita's generosity and the way she took care of everyone was a hallmark of her character. On their Chardham trip, while the women in the group were busy shopping, Manish Mehta would usually stand by, quietly observing, while Rajoo preferred to remain outside or on the road. One day, as they were in a shop, an elderly woman came up to Rajoo and asked for a sweater. Without hesitation, Rajoo took one from the counter and handed it to her. A few minutes later, another elderly woman arrived with the same request. Rajoo, without a second thought, gave her a sweater too. Then, a third lady came forward.

Most people might have grown weary, especially with the pattern of requests, but Rajoo continued to give without any sign of frustration. He handed a sweater to the third lady as well. Meanwhile, inside the shop, Rita, Manish, and others were negotiating the price of the sweaters. Chirag Gosai, a professor traveling with them, observed the scene and remarked to Rita, "We're trying to bring down the price of the sweaters, but look at your husband—he's just giving them away to every elderly woman who approaches!"

Rita, upon hearing this, looked at her husband outside, handing yet another sweater to a lady, and with a smile replied to Chirag, "Let him give. With the blessings of people like them, we are fortunate to be in a position to give back to those in need."

It was this noble sense of fulfillment through giving that defined Rita's approach to life. Later, as they were preparing for their shopping trip to Mall Road in Mussoorie, Rita called her eldest sister, Hansa Kothari, in Rajkot.



"Rita was the youngest among us, yet she always carried herself as if she were the eldest!" said her older sister, Ila Doshi, who lives in Rajkot. Interestingly, Ila is married to Bilkha's Chandrakant Doshi. Chandrakant's brother and his wife are also named Kishor and Nita. Rita's two brothers-in-law and sister-in-law are also named Chandrakant, Kishor, and Neeta. Rita's fourth

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sister, Hansa Kothari, who recently moved from Jetpur to Rajkot, recalled, "We used to call Rita 'Maternal Uncle' because she took care of everyone like a brother—not like an aunt. She was always at the forefront, embracing responsibility with joy and never hesitating to take charge." Rita's remarkable ability to balance responsibility with genuine care for those around her was a testament to her deeply compassionate and selfless nature. She consistently prioritized the well-being of others, always ensuring they felt supported and looked after.

It may not always be easy to accept, but the truth is that Rita was the youngest of five sisters—Madhu, Ila, Sushila, Hansa, and Shruti—and one brother, Bipin, born into the Panchamiya family in Bagsara. The family was neither poor nor wealthy; they were comfortably well-off. Rita's father, Hari Panchamiya, earned his livelihood by traveling to sell cloth in Bagsara and nearby villages. While they didn't possess great riches, "Lakshmi" (the goddess of wealth) blessed them in her own way. Rita, the youngest daughter, lived a life that brought immense pride and strength to both the Doshi and Panchamiya families. Ila recalls, "Rita was clever and articulate from a young age. She was more educated than all of us. While the rest of us only completed the seventh grade in Gujarati, Rita went on to finish twelfth grade!"

There's a common belief in society that younger children are often pampered, while older siblings tend to shoulder greater responsibilities. However, this belief doesn't always hold true. Younger children can naturally be just as intelligent and responsible, as exemplified by Rita Doshi. Even at the tender age of four, Rita began taking on responsibilities, especially after her second-oldest sister, Ila, got married. As each of her sisters married and moved away, the task of managing the household increasingly fell on Rita's shoulders. The period between 1970 and 1980 was one of significant changes, and life in a small town like Bagsara was vastly different from the fast-paced environment of a metropolitan city. Forty years ago, this contrast was even more pronounced. Despite these challenges, Rita maintained strong ties with her family, frequently visiting her sisters' in-laws' homes, particularly during their pregnancies. When Sruti became pregnant in Manavadar, Rita upheld this tradition of supporting her sister, all while balancing her own responsibilities at home.

"I remember one day, about a year after Chandrakant married Shruti, her father, Hari, came to Manavadar with his son, Bipin," recalls Jayu Modi, Rajoo Doshi's elder sister. At the time, Nanalal Doshi, the patriarch of the Doshi family, was still alive and held considerable authority within the household. Hari Panchamiya, Shruti and Rita's father, approached Chandrakant and Nanalal with a request: to allow Bipin to stay in Manavadar and provide him with some work.



Grandmother's Love :
Her playful moments
with grandson
Aayank and granddaughter
Naera, filled with
laughter and affection.

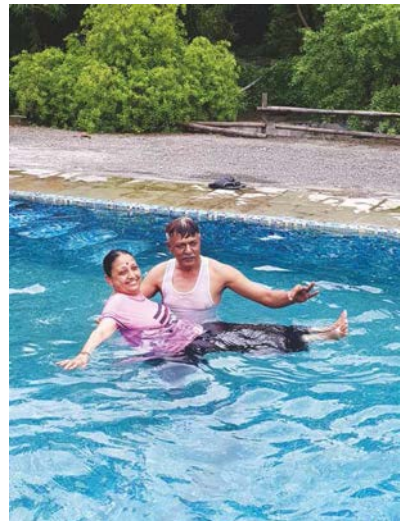
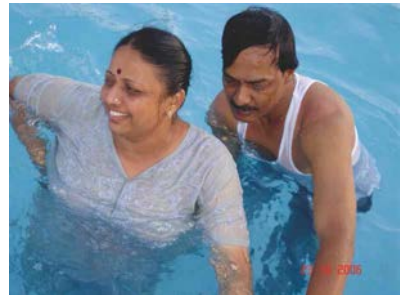
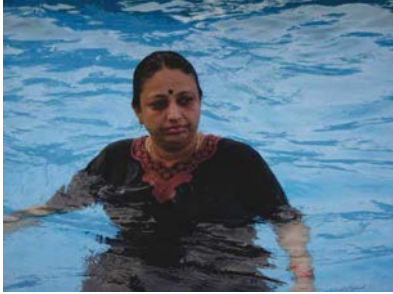








Joy in Simplicity :
Her love for swings,
whether at home,
her Wadi, or the
old age home,
finding joy in the
little things.







Festive Spirit : Celebrating Ganesh Festival with devotion and enthusiasm - 2014





Back then, the Doshi family wasn't as prosperous as it is today. The two elder brothers were employed, and Rajoo Doshi was managing a small business called "Rajoo Plastic." When Chandrakant expressed his inability to employ Bipin, Nanalal Doshi immediately took him aside and said, "Chandu, people cherish good relatives who can lend a hand when needed. Let Bipin stay with us in Manavadar."

Even during financially challenging times, the Doshi family always stood united. Reflecting on those days in Manavadar, Jayu Modi shares, "Brother, that's just how our home was. Seven of us lived there, but we often had to feed thirteen people, and nine would sleep in one room. Our friends, my brother's friends, and family members were always around, filling our home with life and warmth."

Rita's relationship with the Doshi family spanned forty years, from 1982 to 2022. Jayu Modi believes that Rita's innate nature was defined by her culture, affection, sensitivity, and a deep sense of purpose. "Helping others was second nature to her," says Rita's childhood friend, Kirti Mrug. "She couldn't bear to see others suffer. She often told me, 'If anyone needs help—whether at home, with studies, or for medical treatment - let me know!'"

Through challenges and health crises, the Doshi family always stood firmly by those around them. This unwavering support system allowed Rita to become deeply involved in the lives of others. She and Rajoo even took responsibility for funding kidney surgeries for two or three individuals in Kirti's in-laws' village, Bilkhu. When Rita learned that Natu Bhatia, a friend of her brother Bipin Panchamiya, had undergone surgery in Rajkot, she immediately called Kirti and said, "Let's go to the hospital. I want to give them some financial support!"

Rita never hesitated to dedicate her time, energy, and resources to helping anyone in need—whether it was her brother's friend or someone she barely knew. The Doshi family also ensured that all the employees and their families working on their 60-acre farm were well cared for. For instance, Jyotsana, the farm's kitchen manager, had both of her deliveries supervised by a doctor from Junagadh, who was well-acquainted with Rita and Rajoo. Jyotsana's second delivery, which occurred in the seventh month of pregnancy, was particularly risky. Jyotsana's husband, Dhoni,

Rita was the youngest among us, yet she always carried herself as if she were the eldest!" said her older sister, Ila Doshi

Jeev
Rita Doshi

recalls, "Rajoo told the doctor, 'No matter the cost, I want both the mother and child to be safe!'"

In fact, Rita personally named Jyotsana's two sons, Pallav and Sameer. Her first encounter with Jyotsana was entirely serendipitous. After the Doshi family purchased the farm in 2006, they constructed rooms designed in the shape of a Bhunga—a traditional style of housing unique to the Kutch region of Gujarat—in 2014. Jyotsana, who lived in the nearby village of Samatpara, came to assist with the Lipan work (a decorative mixture of mud and cow dung used to adorn walls) on the Bhunga house. Rita was immediately struck by Jyotsana's calm and composed demeanor and invited her entire family to stay at the farm. Jyotsana fondly recalls in her native language, "Rita was like a mother to me. During my pregnancy, whenever I visited the farm, she would insist on feeding me dishes made with pure ghee from Rajkot. She often brought me clothes and even taught me how to cook."

"Rajoo never came to the farm without Rita!" says Mukesh, a young employee of the farm. Jyotsana adds, "Rita may come with four people from Rajkot, but by the time they arrive, there will be forty people here. She hosts everyone with love, and we all eat the same food!"

Dr. Mahesh Vara, the Junagadh District Ayurveda Officer, shares, "Whenever we went to the farm, there was always a full meal for us—or anyone else who came. Rajoo only ate the parathas (flatbread, made from a mixture of flour, water, and oil) Rita made with tea at night, but a full meal was always prepared for everyone else!"

Rita used to call Dr. Mahesh Vara "Doctor Saheb." Rajoo's connection with Dr. Mahesh began fifteen years ago through Rajoo Popat of Junagadh. At that time, Dr. Vara was running an eye donation campaign and needed banners to promote the cause. He reached out to Rajoo Doshi, who covered the cost of all the banners. Over time, their bond grew stronger. Whenever Rajoo and Rita visited the farm, they would always invite Dr. Mahesh and his wife, Joli. Once they arrived, a feast would follow. Rita enjoyed playing cards, and after their games, whether in the field or on trips—Dr. Mahesh would sing songs using the karaoke system available at the farm. Rita's favorite song request was always the same...

On the first monthly death anniversary (May 21, 2022) of Rita Doshi, the Doshi family gathered everyone at the farm. All the people from the neighboring Samatpara village were invited for a meal, and a Bhajan Sandhya (evening of devotional singing) was held. That evening, in memory of Rita, Dr. Mahesh Vara sang her favorite song. He became emotional during the performance as he sang: Hansala, Halo ne have motida nahi re male... (Dearest Swan, let's go, we won't find pearls now...)

At around half-past eleven in the morning,

Ila Doshi, who lives in Rajkot, heard her smartphone ringing and saw a video call coming in from her younger sister, Rita.

Knowing that Rita had gone to Mussoorie, Ila immediately answered the video call. On the other side, Rita appeared, holding two or three warm shawls and asking her elder sister to choose one. She then said, "I've bought these shawls for all three of you sisters."

After disconnecting the call, Ila resumed her routine. However, this activity of Rita, who was busy with shopping again after the video call from the market on mall road, seemed unusual to her husband, Rajoo. He felt a little uneasy. "She could have given the shawls to her sisters after reaching Rajkot, as surprise gifts or souvenirs. If she could, why did she make a video call? She also made a simple call to the other sister, Hansa..."

This action was symbolic, but anyone can be deceived by it.

After making various purchases on Mall Road, Rajoo and Rita had lunch with all their friends at Hotel Padmini Niwas, and later everyone went to their rooms to rest. But none of them knew that by the time they returned to their rooms that night, life would take a tragic turn.

It would become a painful loss that would forever change their lives.



The saying, "Behind every successful man, there is a woman," rings true in the case of Rajoo Doshi, as observed by Dr. Mahesh Vara from Junagadh. When you examine the reality, it's evident that this adage is perfectly fitting. In 1985, when Rita married Rajoo, the entire wedding cost just three thousand seven hundred rupees. At the time, the Doshi family was struggling, working tirelessly to achieve success. However, after Rita became part of the family, prosperity gradually followed. Her sacrifices were immense, and much of the family's success came at her expense. In 1993-94, Rajoo, while continuing his work in Manavadar, started "Rajoo Engineers" in Shapar Veraval, which required frequent travel between Manavadar and Shapar. After about three years, Rajoo proposed starting a cotton ginning business, and in 1997, Rajoo Kotex Limited was established in Manavadar, which ended

Rita's innate nature was defined by her culture, affection, sensitivity, and a deep sense of purpose.

Jeev
Rita Doshi

his constant commuting. Unfortunately, by 2000, the cotton business faced significant losses, and Rajoo returned to the Shapar unit of "Rajoo Engineers." From then on, Rita and their son, Utkarsh, lived in Manavadar for nearly ten years, while Rajoo traveled between Rajkot and Manavadar four or five times a week. It wasn't until 2010 that Rita and Utkarsh moved to Rajkot. Until then...

"After Rajoo, I might be the one who spent the most time with Rita," says Jayu Modi. At the time, Jayu lived in Junagadh with her husband, Anup Modi, a bank officer (the family later moved to Rajkot after his retirement). "Rita and Utkarsh often visited Junagadh. Utkarsh would stay with my children, and the two of us—sister-in-law and brother-in-law—would go about completing various tasks in Junagadh. Rita used to create a Shivling (a symbolic representation of the Hindu god Shiva, typically depicted as a smooth, cylindrical stone pillar) in Manavadar, and we would travel together to Junagadh to immerse it in Damodar Kund. We also went shopping for the farm at the foot of Girnar—all from Junagadh!"

Whether it was the Shivling crafted by Rita herself that needed to be immersed in water, worshipping the Rafda (the abode of the serpent god), or offering water to Lord Shankar, Jayu firmly believes that Rita was the driving force behind all these sacred rituals. "My brother Rajoo visited all the shrines and Jyotirlingas because of Rita, and unknowingly, she made him a believer too," says Jayu. Jayu recalls a particular incident: "We all went to Pawapuri to visit a shrine. Rita had a wish but didn't voice it aloud. Rajoo, sensing her heart's desire, returned to the room, changed into plain clothes as per Jain rituals, and went back to the temple. He participated in declaring donations for various religious rituals, such as Pakshlan, for Lord Parshwanath. For the first time in his life, Rajoo took part in a puja ceremony, dressed in a dhoti and khes (traditional attire) like a devout Jain. Seeing the joy on Rita's face, Rajoo said, 'If your gas-related pain is cured, I am ready to worship every day once we return to Rajkot!'"

"The chemistry between Rajoo and Rita was amazing!" says Joli Vara from Junagadh. Indeed, their bond was special. Rita wanted Rajoo to quit his smoking habit, but she never pressured or forced him. She expressed this wish only to Bhavna Patel and Sona Shah. In fact, Rajoo recalls, "When I went on trips, she would remember to keep my beedi (cheap type of cigarette made from tobacco wrapped in leaves) bundle in her purse!"

It was a reflection of Rita's love that Rajoo Doshi voluntarily quit smoking in 2017, and he managed to stay smoke-free for almost three years. However, ...

Manish Mehta, a friend from Manavadar, says, "If someone met Rita even once, she immediately treated them like family and cared for them as her own!"

A perfect example of this is Professor Chirag Gosai from Junagadh. About ten years ago, Chirag's daughter passed away unexpectedly. In her memory, she formed a group called "Prakruti Mitra" and launched an initiative to distribute eco-friendly handbags to pilgrims attending the Mahashivratri fair (a festival commemorating the wedding of Shiva and Parvati, as well as Shiva's divine dance, the Tandava) and the Girnar Parikrama (a spiritual practice of circumambulating the sacred Girnar mountain). The goal was to reduce plastic pollution in the forest. "We had announced that we would distribute five hundred thousand eco-friendly bags, but with just four days left before the fair, we had only managed to collect twelve thousand bags!" Chirag recalls.

Worried, Chirag was advised by one of his students, Pooja Raja from Manavadar (who had briefly worked as a teacher at Rita's Shaishav School), to contact Rajoo Doshi in Rajkot. Chirag explained the situation to Rajoo over the phone. The next day, Rajoo sent one hundred thousand eco-friendly bags, which Chirag gratefully received. At first glance, it might seem like a simple act of support for a noble cause, but Chirag remembers it differently: "Rita was such a dear friend to me that, like a mother, she would never let me leave empty-handed. Every time we parted, she would ensure I had rice, fruits, food, sweets, yoga mats, Havan kunds (sacred fire pits used in Hindu rituals), cow ghee (clarified butter for rituals), and even cow dung cakes (used to fuel the Havan kund). I consulted her on everything and made decisions based on her advice."

The closeness between them stemmed from Chirag's selfless efforts to protect nature. The Doshi couple was deeply moved by his work, especially when they saw volunteers collect 2 to 3 tons of plastic waste. In recognition of this, Rajoo and Rita invited Chirag and 200 volunteers to their wadi where they hosted a grand celebration in their honor, showing immense respect and appreciation. If any friends or their wives mentioned wanting a late-night snack, Rita would personally prepare Ganthiya (a popular deep-fried snack from Gujarat) and serve it to them at midnight. In Mansarovar, Rita once served Ganthiya (a popular deep-fried snack from Gujarat) to forty-five people. Winter lasts for four months, but at Shrutina bungalow, one could enjoy Adadiya made by Rita for six months. Some friends, acquaintances, and relatives would visit Shrutina and say, "We've come just to eat Rita Bhabhi's Adadiya!"

"Rita lived a life that no other wealthy woman could live."

Rajoo only ate the parathas (flatbread, made from a mixture of flour, water, and oil) Rita made with tea at night, but a full meal was always prepared for everyone else!"

Jeev
Rita Doshi

After Chirag made this statement, Mukesh Mehta, a builder from Junagadh, shared a similar thought: "Wives often stop or scold their husbands when it comes to donations. If the husband is ready to give five thousand, the wife might suggest, 'Give three thousand, there's no need to donate so much.' This is a common sentiment. But Rita was different. If Rajoo was donating fifty thousand, she would say, 'Rajbha, give a little more!' She was the first and only woman I ever saw act like this - Rita was truly one of a kind."

Rajoo Doshi was introduced to Mukesh Mehta for charitable purposes. Mukesh and his friends run a food court during the Mahashivratri fair, offering lemonade to pilgrims during the Girnar Parikrama. Rajoo Doshi joined this effort, and over time, the Doshi family became close to the Mehta family. Chetana Mehta says, "You will never find even one percent of pride in Rita!"

During the first Parikrama they attended, the Doshi couple visited the food tent of Mukesh, in which lemonade was served. Rita suggested, "Rajbha, we should stay here for three days during the Parikrama." Rajoo immediately agreed, saying, "We'll stay next year." The following year, Rajoo built a beautiful tent next to Mukesh's lemonade stand, which impressed everyone, including Mukesh. The tent had four beds and a toilet, and in it, Rajoo and Rita stayed for two nights along with their friends Bhikha and Sarla.

Rita used to tell Mukesh Mehta, Forest Officer Suresh Tilala, and all their friends, including Dr. Mahesh Vara, "If you ever visit the Manavadar side, be sure to stop by for a meal, and feel free to give us a surprise visit. If you find any issue with the food, just let us know, and we'll change the cooks." Suresh Tilala says of Rita, who always insisted on providing healthy, pure, and tasty food to the elderly at the old age home built by the Doshi family in Manavadar, "Rita was the bridge of the family, always kind to the weaker people. She had a heart full of compassion."



"Raj'bha, Bhikha, and Sarla will leave the day after tomorrow, but then we won't have as much fun here!" On the evening of the 19th, sitting with friends at Hotel Padmini Niwas in Mussoorie, Rita shared her thoughts with everyone. For a moment, all attention turned to her. Bhikha (Rasik) and Sarla's nephew was about to get engaged, so Rajoo Doshi had booked their flight tickets for the 21st. At that time, the return tickets for the rest of the group were booked for the 24th of April, but...

Two couples (Rajesh and Pushpa Gandechea, and Jayu and Anup Modi) had already canceled their participation in the tour due to unavoidable reasons. Now, the third couple, Bhikha and Sarla, were also set to leave for Rajkot the following day. With this in mind, everyone felt that

the trip wouldn't be as enjoyable without them.

Rajoo Doshi echoed everyone's thoughts, saying, "If that's the case, let's get our return tickets early too!"

"...But Raj'bha, I have one wish," Rita said, her face clearly expressing her happiness about leaving Mussoorie early. She shared her wish to visit Rishikesh before heading back to Rajkot, to take a holy dip in the Ganga and pay a visit to Lord Shiva.

At that moment, no one knew what fate had in store behind Rita's simple wish. But it was enough for Rajoo Doshi to make her wish come true. That very night, he went to the reception of Hotel Padmini Niwas and told them, "We will check out tomorrow morning."

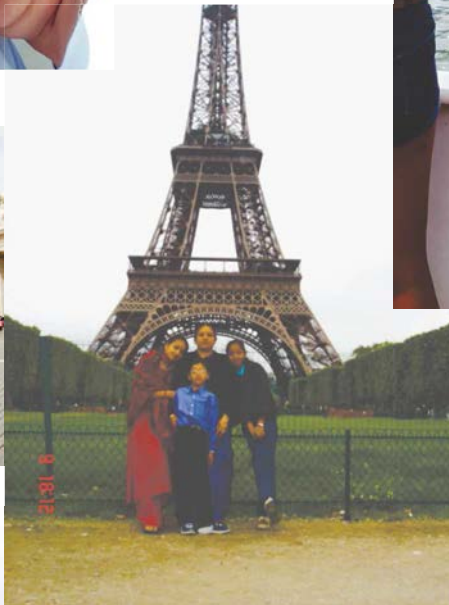
There was a brief silence at the reception as the "party," who had made advance bookings and payments until April 24, now planned to leave three days earlier.

However, Rajoo Doshi had already contacted his travel agent before arriving at the hotel reception. So, the entire group would now fly to Rajkot via Dehradun and Delhi on the 22nd of April. All their tickets were changed to the 22nd.

But at that moment, no one knew who would go, when, or how they would reach their destination.

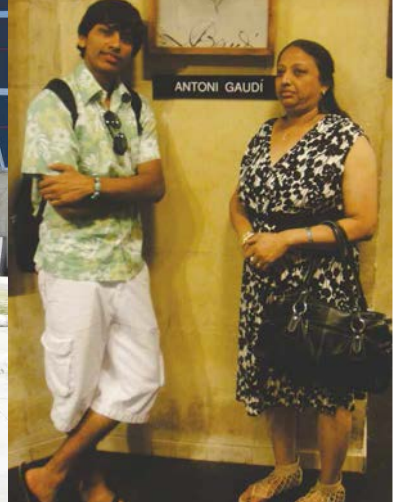
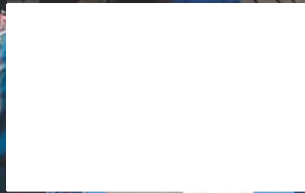
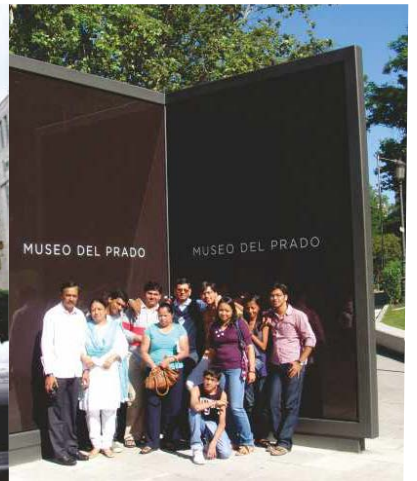
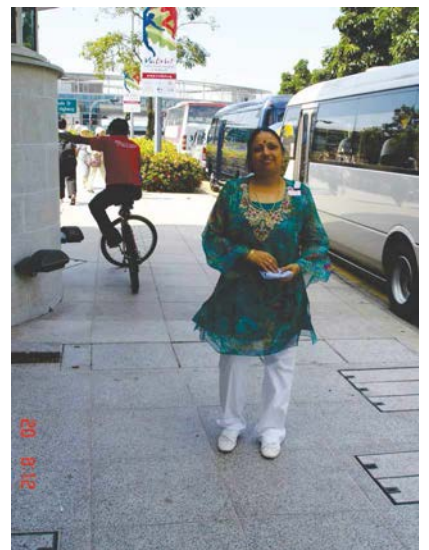
At that moment,
no one knew
what fate had in
store behind
Rita's simple
wish.

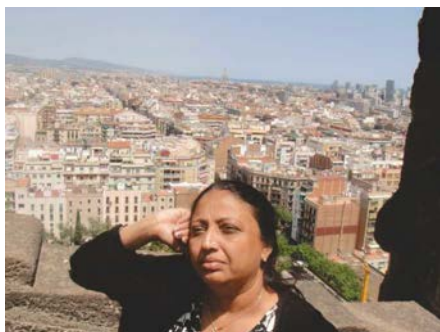
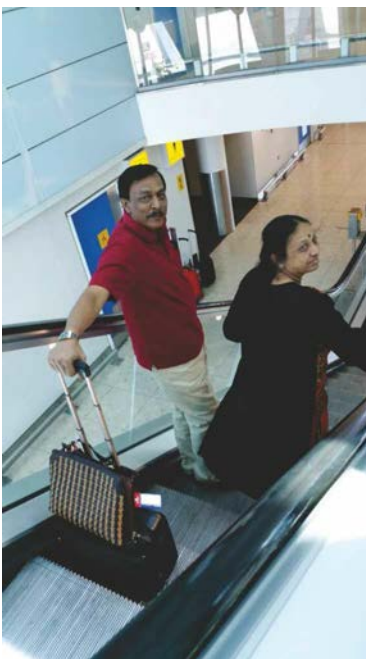




Cherished Travels :
Memories of overseas trips,
exploring the world together.





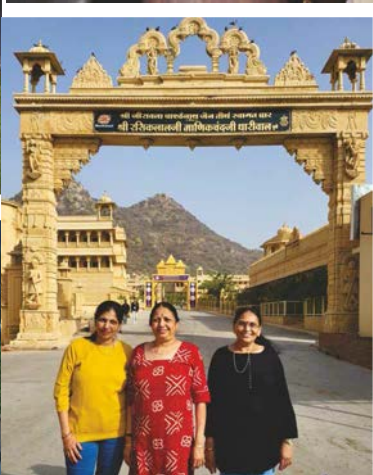


Twelve friends, including Rajoo Rita, vow to perform the darshan of the twelve Jyotirlingas to gether



Spiritual Blessings :
Because of Rita, Rajoo
was able to complete the
darshan of Jyotirlingas,
a journey
of faith & fulfillment.







The Parana of the
"Atthayi" on
September 11, 2002





April 20, 2022

Chaitra Sud Choth, Wednesday

(Fourth day of the waxing moon phase (Shukla Paksha) in the Hindu month of Chaitra)

April 20, 2022.

After enjoying a delicious breakfast, everyone gathered at the grounds of Padmini Niwas Hotel. That day marked the birthday of Manish Mehta's wife, Puja, and everyone was taking photos in various poses to commemorate the occasion. For the first time in 37 years of marriage, Rita turned to Rajoo Doshi and said, "Rajbha, give your phone to someone to take pictures of us!"

What was the almighty's intention behind Rita's words? At that moment, no one could have known.

After the photography session, everyone left the Padmini Niwas Hotel in Mussoorie at 10:30 a.m. and boarded the travel tempo, all excited as the tempo made its way toward Rishikesh. Rita, in particular, was happier than anyone, for she was heading to Rishikesh, the sacred land of Mahadev.

Mahadev, with the Ganga flowing from his Jata (hair), and Gangotri, the source of the Ganga, had always held a special place in Rita's heart. Just seven months ago, when she and Rajoo Doshi traveled to Char Dham with a few friends, Rajoo's childhood friend, Hasmukh Manavadaria, recalled, "Rita made us all take an oath in Gangotri. She made us swear with a wish that on the next Bhai Beej (October 26, 2022), we would all go to Gokul-Mathura together for darshan (auspicious sight of a deity or a holy person)!"

Rita had a special love for traveling, especially visiting pilgrimage sites. However, she

always insisted that everyone be with her during these trips. The same was true for Rajoo, who would organize sightseeing programs or events at the farm in the lap of Girnar, making sure Rita found immense joy and happiness during these trips.

"Even though the trip to Mussoorie was initially planned as per Rita's wish, I had set it for fifteen days!" Rajoo Doshi says. "But when it was realized that some of our friends found it difficult to spend so many days together, Rita told me, 'So Raj'bha, arrange a week-long trip, but only if everyone is together. Then, it will be fun!'" Consequently, Rajoo arranged a trip to Mussoorie from April 17 to April 24. However, just three days into the trip, the entire itinerary was changed. On the evening of April 19, the plan was revised: they would now leave for Rishikesh, stay there for two days, and then fly to Rajkot on April 22. With these changes, Rajoo and Rita expressed their wish for their other friends to stay in Mussoorie and return to Rajkot on April 24, as originally planned.

"But none of us wanted to stay in Mussoorie without Rita and Rajoo!" Madhu Manavadaria, Hasmukh's wife, said. "So, we all insisted on staying together and traveling to Rajkot together on April 22!"

On the morning of April 20, the Doshi couple and their group departed from Padmini Niwas Hotel in Mussoorie for Rishikesh. Rita, who loved playing cards with the women during their travels, found the long journey ideal for such activities. However, since the trip from Mussoorie to Rishikesh was only four and a half hours, everyone decided to play Antakshari (Last letter singing game) instead,

and the air was filled with the cheerful hum of songs.



"I don't praise her just because she was our younger sister, but what Rita did, hardly any other woman could do!" said Rita's elder sister, Hansa Kothari. "Rita was exceptional in social matters. She never missed a single responsibility and never shied away from them... Bittu (Khushboo) was her world, as Bittu had grown up with Rita from the time she was born. Rita also cared for my mother, our Bipin, and her mother-in-law, Mrs. Champa..."

In addition to her service and care, Rita had a remarkable ability to bring happiness to those around her. When her mother-in-law, Champa, was bedridden due to age and health, Rita brought her friend Rambha (Rajesh Gandeche's mother) from Manavadar to Shrutina bungalow so that the two could meet and spend time together. Rita took full responsibility for the kitchen at Shrutina allowing her elder sisters-in-law, Devyani and Nita, to spend more time at religious places

like the haveli and Jain temple.

"Rita was so perfect in her work..." said Ila, Rita's elder sister, her face glowing with praise. "Before leaving for Mussoorie, she even ordered wheat and red chilies for the house (Shrutina), and everyone found out about it later!"

There was once a Dahivada (soft lentil fritters soaked in creamy yogurt) event at Ila's house in Rajkot. As everyone was about to arrive, Ila called Rita to join them. Rita's reply was, "Rajbha isn't going to eat anything like that, so I'll feed him at home, and then we'll come. But you all shouldn't wait for us to start eating!"

For Rajoo, Rita was his "life," and his children were like "lions" to him, their importance equal to his "heartbeat." He always referred to Rita as "Purnangini." Before writing this story, over fifty people who had met me remarked that Rita was a perfect woman. A woman plays so many roles throughout her life—daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, sister-in-law, mother, aunt, and mother-in-law. Rita embraced all these roles with grace. She was also the Managing Trustee of Shaishav School, the founder of the Chandrasruti Old Age Home, and the creator of the Wadi (farmhouse) in the lap of Girnar. In all of these positions, Rita Doshi excelled. Apart from managing 'Shrutina,' she also took care of the Wadi (farmhouse), the house in Manavadar, and the Chandrasruti Old Age Home built by the Doshi family. Her eldest sister, Ila, recalls, "Rita always said that after fulfilling all her responsibilities, she wanted to retire to the house in Manavadar and live at the Wadi in the lap of Girnar."

Hasmukh Manavadaria recalls an incident from 2021 when the family's farm near Movia was under construction. "Everyone, including Rita and Rajoo Doshi, had gathered for a light breakfast. When Rita noticed there weren't enough plates, she immediately told Hasmukh, 'Go to Essen (the Doshi Group's factory manufacturing disposable products) and get disposable plates tomorrow.'"

Hasmukh went to Essen and asked Rajoo's nephew, Pallav Doshi, who manages the factory, to provide 200 disposable plates. Pallav arranged for 500 plates to be packed into his car. This incident exemplifies the Doshi family's generous and caring nature. Madhu Manavadaria describes how Pallav paid three times more attention to Rita's recommendations, a reflection of how deeply

But none of us
wanted to stay in
Mussoorie
without Rita and
Rajoo!

Jeev
Rita Doshi

Rita herself cared for others. "Rita took care of us so well that whenever we were at the Wadi, she would bring sweets from Rajkot for us. Whether it was herself or Rajoo, they would never eat those sweets." Rita was meticulous about everyone's preferences. "She always knew and remembered what each of us liked. If Rekha (Jaymin Gauswami's wife) didn't eat parathas (flatbread, made from a mixture of flour, water, and oil) Rita would ensure Thepla (flatbread made with a mix of flour and spices) or roti was prepared for her. My husband, Hasmukh, has a habit of adding curd to dalbhat (Rice and lentil soup mixed) and whenever dalbhat was served, there would always be curd on his plate. For Sarla (Bhikha Dekiwadia's wife), only parottas made with oil were prepared."

Despite the Doshi family being the backbone of the 'Rajoo Group of Companies,' which employs over 1,600 people, you would never sense an attitude of ownership (there is never any hint of arrogance associated with ownership) in the family's speech, behavior, or mannerisms - from the eldest, Kishor Doshi, to the youngest adult member, Utkarsh Doshi. There's no sign of "Sethanipanu" (arrogance associated with wealth) in the elder sisters-in-laws or Rita. Whether during the Ganapati festival or family gatherings with Dr. Rajesh Patel or advocate Paras Buddhadev, everyone's experience with the Doshi family is the same: Even at midnight, if you're sitting at 'Shrutina,' you can expect snacks like ganthiya (a popular deep-fried snack from Gujarat), sukhadi (sweet made from whole wheat flour, and jaggery), or adadiya, served with love. Rita would personally make tea and serve it with care.

The same sequence would play out at the Wadi at Girnar's base. So many acquaintances, friends, relatives, and even celebrities have enjoyed the ganthiya (a popular deep-fried snack from Gujarat) made by Rita at midnight that reading their names would tire you out.

Yet, Rita would never get tired of feeding them.



On the tempo ride to Rishikesh, everyone enjoyed the light snacks they had packed. After a round of Antakshari, Rita, who had been resting for a while, woke up. She shared a couple of biscuits and some puffed rice with everyone, something that Rajoo noticed. Rajoo had decided to stay at a hotel in Rishikesh that was close to the Ganga ghat (a series of steps leading to the banks of the Ganges River, where people bathe, perform rituals), requiring minimal walking.

Over the past two years, Rajoo had become increasingly concerned about Rita's health, especially as she was still struggling with recurring gas troubles. Even a year and a half ago, while preparing ganthiya (a popular deep-fried snack from Gujarat) at 'Shrutina,' a pan of hot oil had overturned and burned Rita. The burn healed quickly with Rajoo Doshi's alternative medicine

treatment, but the underlying health issues remained.

Meanwhile, on the tempo heading to Rishikesh, Rita received a call from her friend and sister-in-law, Jayu, from Rajkot. The two began chatting, and Rajoo overheard Rita telling Jayu, "This time, the trip isn't much fun, so we left for Rishikesh. I feel bad for everyone being tied down because of me."

Rita's words, "because of me," made everyone, including Rajoo Doshi, want to explain that they weren't bound by her. In fact, it was because of her that they were able to travel so much and grow spiritually through pilgrimages. Madhu Manavadaria admitted, "We would never have made the 'Chardham' journey in our lives, but it was only because of Rita that we could."

Just as the tempo entered Rishikesh, it was three in the afternoon.



"I used to call Rita 'Kakima' (Aunt) because she was Khushboo's aunt!" said Advocate Paras Buddhadev, a Reiki Master. According to Reiki, one can help alleviate another's pain. Paras and Khushboo had been classmates in sixth grade, which is how he got to know the Doshi family. Paras often gave Reiki to his 'Kakima' to relieve her gas problems. He recalls, "If my aunt was out of town, I would send her Reiki from Rajkot and call her. But when she went to Mussoorie, I couldn't contact her this time!"

"Rita had a unique personality—one you could search for with a lantern and still not find!" said renowned homeopath Dr. Rajesh Patel from Rajkot. "She had remarkable situational awareness and was never distracted. Even when she came to me for medicine, despite being in pain, she never once showed it on her face."

Dr. Rajesh Patel, along with Bhavna Patel, daughter-in-law of Turbo Group, and Sona Shah, became close to the Doshi family during the Ganesh (prominent Hindu god of beginnings, wisdom and luck) festival. The Doshi family's Ganesh celebration began in a completely unexpected way. One night in 2015, Rajoo and Rita Doshi were returning from Nageshwar Teerth when they noticed Ganesh idols placed along the way. At Rita's request, Rajoo arranged for a mandap serviceman to stay overnight and prepare for the festival.

The following day, they installed an eight-foot Ganesh idol,

Rita always said that after fulfilling all her responsibilities, she wanted to retire to the house in Manavadar and live at the Wadi in the lap of Girnar.

Jeev
Rita Doshi

marking the beginning of the Doshi family's annual Ganesh festival. Rajoo, though a kind-hearted atheist, had deep faith in Rita's beliefs. Bhavna Patel, Rita's best friend, explains, "Actually, niece Khushboo had been struggling to conceive, so Rita vowed to celebrate the Ganesh festival. After the first festival, Khushboo received 'good news,' and from then on, Rita decided to continue the celebration for eleven years!"



"Jaymin, let's go to Haridwar!"

Rajoo Doshi insisted, so Jaymin Goswami and Bhikha Dekiwadia both joined the travel tempo, and it headed toward Haridwar. Jaymin was a bit upset because, after reaching Rishikesh, he had rented an Activa (motorbike) to check a nearby hotel by the Ganga ghat. However, he couldn't find any hotel with five rooms for the five couples as he had hoped.

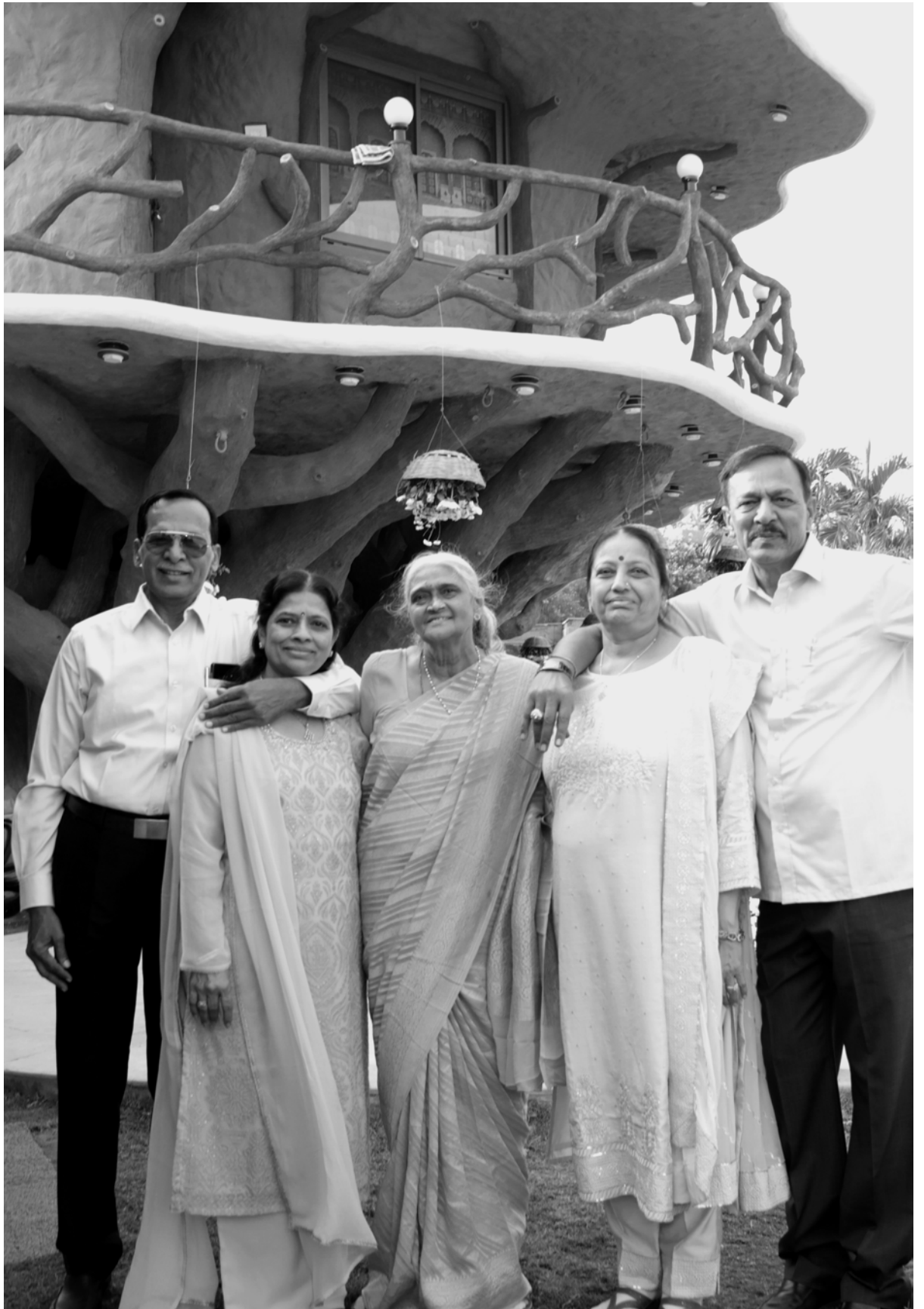
Jaymin eventually found a hotel, but it was across a bridge, which Rajoo rejected. They didn't want Rita to undergo any extra strain or discomfort, which could negatively affect her health. Jaymin even offered to take Rita to the hotel on the Activa, but Rajoo remained firm.

"Let's try to get a room at 'Ganga Sadan' in Haridwar!" suggested Manish Mehta from the travel tempo, dialing the hotel's number. This was the same 'Ganga Sadan' hotel where they had all stayed during the Char Dham tour in October 2021. The hotel, its premises, the staff, and the Ganga ghat were all familiar to the Doshi family and their friends. Fortunately, five rooms were available, but by the time they reached Haridwar and Ganga Sadan, it was 6 o'clock, and the aarti was about to begin. Manish came up with a plan: Rajoo Doshi, along with all the women, including Rita, would go to the Ganga Ghat for the aarti, while Manish and the other men would handle the hotel check-in and luggage, then join them for the aarti.

"That works!" Rajoo agreed. Before leaving with all the women, he urged, "But make sure the rooms are facing the Ganga!"

With that, Rajoo Doshi departed with Rita and the other wives in separate cycle rickshaws, heading for what would be Rita's final Ganga Aarti—the one she had always cherished.

In fact, it was
because of her
that they were
able to travel
so much







The beautiful tradition
of Rajoo and Rita
eating from the same plate.





Passion for Life :
Her love for dressing up,
makeup, reflecting
her vibrant spirit.



A successful
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Shaishav School





ચંદ્રશ્રુતિ - ઘરનું ઘર
શુભારંભ
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સ્થળ
ચંદ્રશ્રુતિ - ઘરનું ઘર
સણોસરા બસસ્ટોપ પાસે
માણાવદર





April 21, 2022

Chaitra Sud Fifth, Thursday

(the fifth day of the waxing moon phase (Shukla Paksha) in the Hindu month of Chaitra)

April 21, 2022.

It was a quarter to midnight, and the date had officially turned to a new day. Hasmukh Manavadaria lay on the double bed in his room at the 'Ganga Sadan' hotel in Haridwar, while his wife, Madhu, was wiping her hands after washing them at the washbasin. Just thirty or forty minutes earlier, she had applied soothing powder to Rita's skin to ease the irritation caused by Urticaria (a raised, itchy rash that appears on the skin).. Rekha, Sarla, and Pooja were also in the room with Rita.

A few hours earlier, everyone had celebrated Pooja's birthday together on the terrace of 'Ganga Sadan.' As they had left Mussoorie for Rishikesh in the morning, Rita had told her husband, Rajoo Doshi, that they would cut a cake to celebrate Pooja's birthday that night.

It was time for the evening aarti at the Ganga Ghat when the group decided to make an unscheduled night stop in Haridwar, instead of Rishikesh. Rajoo Doshi, his wife Rita, and the four other friends' wives arrived at the aarti venue in separate hand rickshaws. Meanwhile, Manish, Jaymin, Rasik (Bhikha), and Hasmukh completed the check-in formalities at 'Ganga Sadan,' placed their belongings in their rooms, and joined the others at the aarti site just before it began.

On the way to the aarti venue, Rita Doshi called her regular Pandit, Himanshu, who was in Haridwar. He met them at the aarti venue, and afterward, everyone lit a lamp of faith and allowed it to float in the river Ganga.

By eight o'clock, the Doshi couple and their friends returned to 'Ganga Sadan,' refreshed from the aarti, and gathered on the terrace for dinner. Rita, more interested in cutting the birthday cake for her younger sister, Pooja Mehta, than in eating, encouraged everyone to order a cake at the reception. The cake arrived, and everyone sat down to enjoy it after cutting it. During the meal, Khushboo and Kruti called, and Rita spoke with them.

At that moment, no one knew that Rita was speaking to her daughters for the last time—making the final two calls of her life. The atmosphere at that time was different—on Pooja's birthday, everyone had shared sweets and taken photographs, exchanging warm greetings. Afterward, they all descended from the terrace of 'Ganga Sadan.'

Madhu Manavadaria later recalled, "No matter where we went on a trip or stayed, we always gathered in Rajoo and Rita's room at night. So, like usual, all the women went to Rita's room at 'Ganga Sadan' and set up a typical women's talk session."

Who can predict tomorrow? This has always been humanity's weakness. No one ever truly knows what fate has in store or how nature will surprise them the next day. Rajoo Doshi and his friends were unaware of what the future held for them. His friends—Hasmukh Manavadaria, Manish Mehta, Jaymin Goswami, and Bhikhu Dekiwadia—had stepped out of 'Ganga Sadan' with the intention of fulfilling their wives' and sisters-in-law's requests for 'Masala Paan.' (betel leaf with a spice mixture) After drinking soda, enjoying paan, and bringing some back for their wives, they began discussing their plans for the following day in Haridwar. They decided they would visit the market. Hasmukh Manavadaria then called Rajkot to get a contact number from his daughter-in-law, who provided him with the phone number of a restaurant owner from Jamjodhpurwala.

"We'll go there for a meal tomorrow," Hasmukh said after receiving the number, and the group returned to the 'Ganga Sadan' hotel. It was at that moment they realized the women who had gathered in Rita Doshi's room had all returned to their own rooms because...

At a quarter to twelve, Rita said, "Let's part ways now. Bhikha and Sarla need to leave early tomorrow... I'm feeling sleepy too!"

"After we reach Rajkot, we will take Rita to Buri village (near Manavadar)!" said Madhu, who had just returned to her room from Rita's. She was concerned about Rita's health, as she had been feeling weak intermittently, and suggested they take her to see a doctor in Buri village. Hearing his wife's words, Hasmukh agreed, saying, "Yes, we'll do that. Hopefully, Rita's health will improve with this."

At that very moment, Rajoo Doshi entered his room in the 'Gangasadan' lobby, holding a

paan he had gotten from his friends. He offered it to Rita, but she declined.

Rajoo immediately noticed that Rita appeared more tired and unwell than usual.



Rita Doshi had always been the kind of person who remained cheerful despite physical discomfort and would go out of her way to make others happy or ease their suffering. Perhaps this nature of hers was something she had inherited from her husband, Rajoo Doshi. There was a woman from Junagadh who earned a modest income by ordering cotton sarees from Calcutta and selling them to her friends. A woman from a wealthier family might not do such a thing, but when Rita met this woman...

"Rita had the decency to help in a way that preserved the dignity of the other person!" said Mukesh Hirpara, a resident of Junagadh who now lives in Vapi. "Rita used to call my wife, Hira, from Rajkot and ask her to buy 8-10 cotton sarees and send them to her. Hira would send them, but by buying these sarees, Rita was financially supporting that woman. I know this for a fact!"

Hira's observation is spot on—"Rita had a unique ability to adjust herself to match the person she was dealing with at any given moment." Indeed, Rita possessed an incredible talent for adapting to those around her, effortlessly aligning herself with their needs and emotions. Jayanti Mandalia, a teacher at Manavadar Government High School, and his wife, who were childless, received the same level of respect from Rita as one would give to parents. Similarly, Madhusudan Sanghvi, the principal of Rita's 'Shaishav School,' was also childless. Yet, Rita treated both couples with utmost care and respect, as though they were her own parents. When Jayanti Mandalia suffered from heart blockage, Rita took him and his wife to multiple physicians in Rajkot. She even arranged for a car to bring him back to Manavadar after his heart surgery in Ahmedabad. Madhusudan Sanghvi, who served as the principal of Shaishav School for thirteen years, recalled that the school often incurred losses amounting to hundreds of thousands of rupees. This was because Rita would not only waive the students' fees but also provide them with books, notebooks, and stationery. She never charged fees from any student from Galvav, the Doshi family's ancestral village.

Whether it was the buttermilk center in Manavadar that had been running since 2006, the Trimbakeshwar Mahadev

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knows what fate
has in store or
how nature will
surprise them the
next day.

temple, or the chickpea for Chabutara (a tower-like structure in India that provides a nesting place for birds, especially pigeons) made by Mandlia sir, Rita took on financial responsibility for all of these causes without hesitation. Ex-Principal Sanghvi recalled how, after Rita moved to Rajkot, needy people would wait for her arrival at 'Vatsalya' (the name of the Doshi family's house in Manavadar). They knew that she would offer them warmth, support, and help with whatever they needed.

After Chandrakant Doshi passed away, Rajoo Doshi gained the title and respect of 'Nagar Sheth' (City chief) of Manavadar, and Rita became known as the 'Nagar Shethani.' However, Rita was even closer to the people's hearts. When it came to matters that needed attention, people often reached out to Rita first, even though the work was to be handled by Rajoo. When Ashwin Mistry, a furniture worker in Manavadar, was diagnosed with diabetes, he told Rita, "You should tell Rajoo to give me medicine for diabetes." Mukesh Hirpara, from Vapi-Junagarh, once said, "The whole Doshi family is like that—if needed, they will lend money to the needy, even if they have to borrow it at interest!"

Rita Doshi's humanity, kindness, and love became a lasting legacy for the family. The Doshi family's wealth and success were seen as gifts from God, but their passion for helping those in need never faded. Here's an example: Rajesh Popat, a friend who studied with Rajoo Doshi at Bahauddin College, and his wife Nila once stopped at a wadi. Suddenly, a bus arrived with fifty people. An acquaintance of Rajoo Doshi had brought the group to visit the wadi. Despite the unexpected arrival, Rita, ever the gracious host, welcomed them warmly and insisted they stay for a meal. Even with fifty unanticipated guests, Rita ensured everyone was well-fed, once again embodying the spirit of Annapurna (the goddess of nourishment), as described by former Principal Sanghvi.

Rajesh Popat's wife, Nila, remarked, "I could never take care of everyone at once. I might have unknowingly discriminated against someone. But Rita—she treated everyone equally with the same respect, honor, and love. Her welcome was always warm, no matter who it was."



As Rajoo Doshi entered his room at 'Gangasadan' after speaking with Bhikhu (Rasik) and Sarla Dekiwadia, who were preparing to leave for Rajkot early the next morning for his nephew's engagement, he noticed the pain on Rita's face. He asked, "It seems like the pain has started?" Rita didn't respond, but Rajoo understood the answer. He sat next to her and gave her soda, hoping it would help ease the pain, which was gradually intensifying due to her gastric issues. For a while, it

seemed to provide some relief, but it didn't last long.

Rajoo realized that the soda wasn't enough, so without hesitation, he began treatment. Rita felt nauseous, as though she might vomit. In the past, vomiting had always helped her pain and suffering gradually subside. However, today her pain was less intense than what she had experienced in Rajkot, but despite her efforts, she couldn't bring herself to vomit. Rita desperately hoped that vomiting would provide some relief.

She even tried to force it, inserting her fingers deep into her throat in an attempt to expel the nausea stuck in her chest, but she was unsuccessful. Rajoo also sensed that the situation was different—perhaps more serious—than regular gastric pain, since Rita couldn't vomit, and her pain was only worsening. When it became clear that she was struggling to breathe, Rajoo Doshi urgently called out to Jaymin Goswami, who was in the next room: "Rita's health is deteriorating. Come quickly!"

Jaymin Goswami immediately woke up and rushed to Rajoo and Rita Doshi's room. His wife, Rekha, went to knock on the doors of Bhikhu, Manish, and Hasmukh's rooms, calling them out: "Rita's health is not good, we need to act fast!"



"This regret will stay with me for a lifetime," says Dr. Rajesh Patel, a homeopathic doctor from Rajkot. "I was never able to fully cure Rita's gastric issues, though I provided temporary relief at the time."

In November 2020, Rita began struggling with recurring health problems after a hot oil pan had fallen off the gas, causing burns. While she recovered quickly from the burns, the antibiotics used for treatment triggered persistent gastric issues.

This wasn't the first time her health had been a concern. In 2017, Rita started experiencing digestive problems, which led the couple to consult several naturopathic doctors. Rajoo, a strong believer in alternative medicine, sought diagnoses and treatments from various doctors in Rajkot, Ahmedabad, Junagadh, Navsari, and Jamnagar. Each time, her test results were assessed as moderate.

Rajoo, who had successfully treated many seriously ill patients with alternative medicine, left no stone unturned in trying

The whole Doshi family is like that—if needed, they will lend money to the needy, even if they have to borrow it at interest

Jeev
Rita Doshi

to help Rita. Although he wasn't fully convinced by allopathic medicine, he consulted a doctor in Jamnagar, who was familiar with his brother-in-law Rajendra Kothari. Jayu accompanied Rita to Navsari for treatment, and Sona Shah took her to Wankaner. Dr. Rajesh Patel started homeopathic treatment, while years earlier, Ayurvedic researcher Dr. Mukesh Shukla from Surendranagar had helped alleviate her symptoms. In addition, Paras Buddhadev provided Reiki to help relieve her physical pain. Rajoo also organized a ten-day naturopathy camp in July 2021 at their wadi. They arranged the necessary equipment, including a table for Shirodhara (an Ayurvedic treatment that involves pouring a liquid onto the forehead for a set amount of time), steam bath apparatus, tubs, and more. During these ten days, everyone, including Rita, followed strict yoga, diet, meditation, and naturopathy in hopes of improving her health. While this approach helped, her gastric issues never fully disappeared.

At the 'Gangasadan' hotel in Haridwar, Rita was once again battling the same agonizing gastric pain.



It was 1:00 AM.

All the friends had gathered in Rajoo and Rita's room. Rita's condition had worsened. She had tried to vomit earlier, but instead of it coming out of her mouth, it had gone into her windpipe. Now, she was struggling to breathe.

The women surrounded her, trying to comfort her. Fifteen minutes had already passed since Manish had rushed to the hotel reception, urgently requesting a doctor and an ambulance. Meanwhile, Rajoo and Jaymin were applying pressure to Rita's chest, hoping to ease her breathing. But the struggle for air was so intense that the pressure on the palm of the hand Rita was holding—Puja's supporting hand—only seemed to increase. At that moment, the doctor arrived. He checked her pulse and remained silent, his face grim.

It was now 1:05 AM, and the room fell silent.

Rajoo Doshi stood motionless, speechless. The air in the room was thick with the realization that something had gone terribly wrong. And then, just like that, everything went quiet.

At the
'Gangasadan'
hotel in
Haridwar, Rita
was once again
battling the
same agonizing
gastric pain.





Those Twenty-seven hours and later...

"Please arrange an air ambulance for us."

The one who was your 'Jeev' (life), the one who took their last breath in your lap—no matter how profound the grief, the bereaved must bury that pain and gather the strength to move forward under the crushing weight of circumstances. In that same state of heartbreak and despair, Rajoo Doshi pleaded with the ambulance driver at Haridwar Hospital to arrange for an air ambulance. Rita Doshi, who had already walked with grace to Mahadev, was examined by a doctor who had arrived at the hotel. The doctor, helpless, raised his hands in surrender. Rajoo could hardly accept the reality and refused to let Rita go. He placed her in the road ambulance that had just arrived and headed to the civil hospital. As he began to grasp that destiny had taken her from him, his mind felt paralyzed by the shock.

"He knew their home was 1,325 kilometers away and that he needed to get Rita to Shrutina as quickly as possible. It felt as though he was torturing himself by desperately trying to push through the shock, so he decided to arrange an air ambulance. But the harsh reality soon set in: the formalities would take at least eight to ten hours before the air ambulance could arrive, and the unavoidable post-mortem procedures could not be bypassed."

It has always been said that Almighty creates immense sorrow and puts a person to great tests, but each test is always in proportion to the person's capacity to endure. Destiny had once again thrown Rajoo into the fire of an unimaginable test. Similar tests had been inflicted on him in

2013, when he lost Chandrakant Doshi, and again in 2021 with Himmat Ajmera. Even today, by taking away his 'jeev' (soul), destiny left Rajoo Doshi helpless, forcing him to somehow carry on with his life while trying to absorb the shock. He had to endure this agony. Rajoo also knew that, while bearing this blow, he would have to break the news to the Doshi family in Rajkot as well. His mind was clouded, his heart racing, yet this youngest son of the Doshi family understood that, though shattered inside, he wouldn't allow himself to break on the outside. Despite the overwhelming pain, he knew he had to persevere—for his family, for everyone who relied on him. He had to move forward, even if it meant leaving a part of himself behind.

There was no intention of conducting a post-mortem, so Rajoo quickly abandoned the idea of arranging an air ambulance. Within minutes, he opted for a more immediate solution—traveling by road in an ambulance. He was determined not to let bureaucracy or formalities delay his journey. He knew the road ahead would be long—over twenty-four hours from Hardwar to Rajkot—and that obstacles might arise due to the lack of official documentation regarding Rita's death. But Rajoo didn't want to waste time worrying about such things. A freezer-equipped ambulance was arranged from Delhi, and it began its journey from Hardwar, carrying Rita's body. The plan was to switch ambulances along the way.

At 2 AM, the ambulance departed from Hardwar. Rajoo was accompanied by Bhikhu and Jaymin Goswami. Manish Mehta, along with all the weeping women who had traveled to Hardwar from Mussoorie, followed closely in the same travel tempo. The tempo that had once carried them all to Hardwar now trailed behind the ambulance, heading toward Rajkot.



Twenty-seven hours on the road to Shrutina felt like twenty-seven lifetimes," Rajoo later said. Though his words were simple, they carried the weight of an unimaginable sorrow. Only those who could truly comprehend the depth of his pain could understand the agony of each passing hour. Rajoo's suffering was felt by everyone at Shrutina in the hours that followed. That's why his son-in-law, Shwetang Monani, had already begun driving to Himmat Nagar to meet Rajoo on his way and share in the grief. Meanwhile, Khushboo, despite her desire to join her father, remained in Rajkot. She needed to bear the shock and comfort the rest of the family at Shrutina. This all unfolded from 4 p.m. on April 21, 2022. For the first twelve hours—from 2 a.m. to 2 p.m. on that day—no one knew the extent of the unimaginable tragedy that had occurred in Hardwar.

"Rita breathed her last in my lap, and an hour and a half later, as I was preparing to leave for Rajkot with her in the ambulance, one thought struck me like a hammer!" Rajoo Doshi recalls.

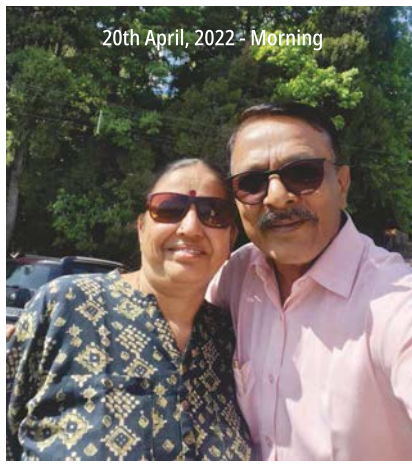


The last picture at the temple on April 17



The photo while heading to the airport





During 17th to 21st April



The last selfi was taken at 9:30 pm on April 20, 2022







Tribute



"The shock of this is unbearable for me. What will happen when everyone at Shrutina finds out? Can they bear it?"

This thought was inevitable for Rajoo, as the sudden, unexpected loss of someone who had gone on a pleasure trip could devastate the family. Coincidentally, while Rajoo and Rita had left Mussoorie for Rishikesh the previous morning, Khushboo and Utsav Doshi were traveling from Rajkot to Delhi by air. Meanwhile, at Shrutina in Rajkot, Rita's family—Devyani, Kishor, Nita, and their children—were there. It was essential that others, like Jayu, Shaili, Kruti, Chintan, and Shwetang, also reach Shrutina. As Rajoo silently watched Rita's lifeless body, his mind was overwhelmed with thoughts. He was in a state of shock, but he had to act quickly and take control of the situation. With Rita's phone now switched off, He made a call to Sunil Jain, the executive director of the 'Rajoo Group,' who had gone to Delhi with Khushboo and Utsav. Rajoo explained the dire situation to Sunil and asked him to find a way to leave Delhi and reach Rajkot in the morning along with Khushboo and Utsav.

Sunil Jain, also shocked and overwhelmed, didn't know what pretext to give Khushboo and Utsav to return to Rajkot. An hour later, Sunil called Rajoo back, expressing his frustration: "I don't know what excuse to give to Khushboo and Utsav. I can't think of anything!"

It was undoubtedly Mahadev's cruelty that, in the first twenty-four hours after losing his 'Jeev,' Rajoo found no comfort in crying out to release his sorrow. Amidst his grief and struggle to maintain composure, he took a deep breath and came up with a plan. Despite the overwhelming weight of his own loss, he focused on the well-being of his family and the need to keep things calm. "Tell them there's a meeting with the investor," Rajoo instructed.

During those critical first twenty-four hours, Rajoo wore a mask of calm, concealing the unbearable truth. He knew that telling his children would be even more excruciating than the pain he was already enduring. The silence of those early hours was both a shield and a torment, as Rajoo fought against his sorrow while thinking about what awaited him back at Shrutina.

It was around two in the morning when a freezer ambulance from Delhi passed him on the way. As the ambulance was switched onto the road, Rajoo noticed that only two drivers had been sent in the new ambulance, just as instructed. He was

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Jeev
Rita Doshi

determined to reach Shrutina as quickly and safely as possible. But slowly, his mind began to feel numb. The one relief was that, since it was nighttime, he hadn't received any calls from Shrutina or any other relatives—there was no need to face the dilemma of whether to avoid, answer, or lie during a call. However, Rajoo's tough test will happen as soon as night ends, and calls from the home need to receive. The challenge would be what to say when he answers the call. It was his daughter, Karishma, who put him in a moral dilemma at 8:30 in the morning.

"My daughter, your Mommy's a sleep!" When Karishma called and asked to speak with her mother after her phone was turned off, Rajoo replied with that answer. But deep down, he knew that as per the Doshi family tradition, the calls would start pouring in soon. He decided he wouldn't answer any personal calls for now.

Rajoo was fully aware that if Rita's phone was turned off, or if she didn't speak to him, or if his own calls went unanswered, the worry would intensify. In such a situation, the shock could no longer be hidden, but he was determined not to say anything about Rita until Khushboo and Utsav had reached Rajkot from Delhi. How does one explain such a tragic turn of events? A man sacrifices his own pain for the sake of his family. Rajoo Doshi endured an unimaginable heartbreak. He didn't speak much, but anyone who has faced a similar situation can understand that, in that moment, Rajoo's greatest fear was that, upon learning this shocking and unreal truth, nothing false should befall any member of his family.

It was important that when Rajoo revealed the truth about Rita, the family would be able to comfort one another, and some of those at Shrutina could help ease the pain or soothe the grieving by offering their support and solace. Those who can dissolve their bewailing and wailings by embracing them also should be present at Shrutina. So, from the ambulance, Rajoo Doshi called family friends Chandresh Savjani and Kirit Vachani, instructing them to enter the house only after his daughter and son-in-law had arrived at Shrutina. Only then would he call and speak with Kishor.

As things unfolded, Rajoo tried to delay the moment. By 3:00 PM on April 21, he still hadn't told anyone at home what had happened. Perhaps some of them had an inkling, but no one could have imagined the truth. By 3:00 PM, Rajoo learned that everyone, including Khushboo and Utsav from Delhi, had gathered at Shrutina. At that point, he called Kishor and asked him to put the phone on the speaker. The entire household at Shrutina gathered around the smartphone. In that moment, Rajoo Doshi spoke the painful truth: Rita had left Shrutina and taken refuge with Mahadev.

Some personal talk & observation :

When are you coming to Rajkot ? "Jeev"... want to write a book !

On May 21, 2022, the monthly death anniversary of Rita, the Doshi family organized a bhajan-sandhya (gathering to sing religious songs in the evening to express devotion to God) at Wadi, nestled in the lap of Girnar, and invited the villagers of Samatpara for a meal. On that same morning, at 8:08 AM, Rajoo Doshi sent me a WhatsApp message. Being late riser by habit, I had replied at 10:12 AM that I would meet him by flying in a plane...

But my legs felt heavy. As the eldest in my family, I always wished for an older brother and sister-in-law. How much comfort their presence would have brought at home. I firmly believe that elders serve as a 'shield' for the younger ones. So, I had adopted Rajoo and Rita as my elder brother and sister-in-law. However, the shock of Rita's unexpected passing was so overwhelming that I couldn't bring myself to speak with Rajoo (even on the phone). I lacked courage. After all, it was only a formality—but sometimes, a formality can become an incredibly painful one. I decided that when I eventually faced Rajoo, I would try to avoid discussing Rita. Yet, the very thing I had feared—talking about Rita—was inevitable.

I sat in front of Rajoo, and he mentioned that I would have to meet him two or three times a week, and we would talk only about Rita.

There were conditions as well: I had to meet more than fifty people, from Ahmedabad, Baroda, Mumbai, Bagasara, Rajkot, Manavadar, Junagadh, excluding those from London and America. The second condition was that I couldn't go to Mumbai until the book was finished. Rajoo, once he becomes stubborn, doesn't easily bend. And this stubbornness was all for 'Jeev.' I never avoided anything my sisters-in-law asked of me, and all the wives of my honorary (chosen) brothers—my honorary sisters-in-law—know it very well. Rita and Rajoo are among the top when it comes to this bond and truly embodied the very foundation of it.

I knew that writing the book Jeev would be an incredibly difficult task for me, for many reasons. I had to meet everyone, even as the wounds of shock were still raw. Many of them cried as they spoke. I would have been upset too, but I had to allow them time to heal emotionally. For the book Jeev, I met around sixty-five people,

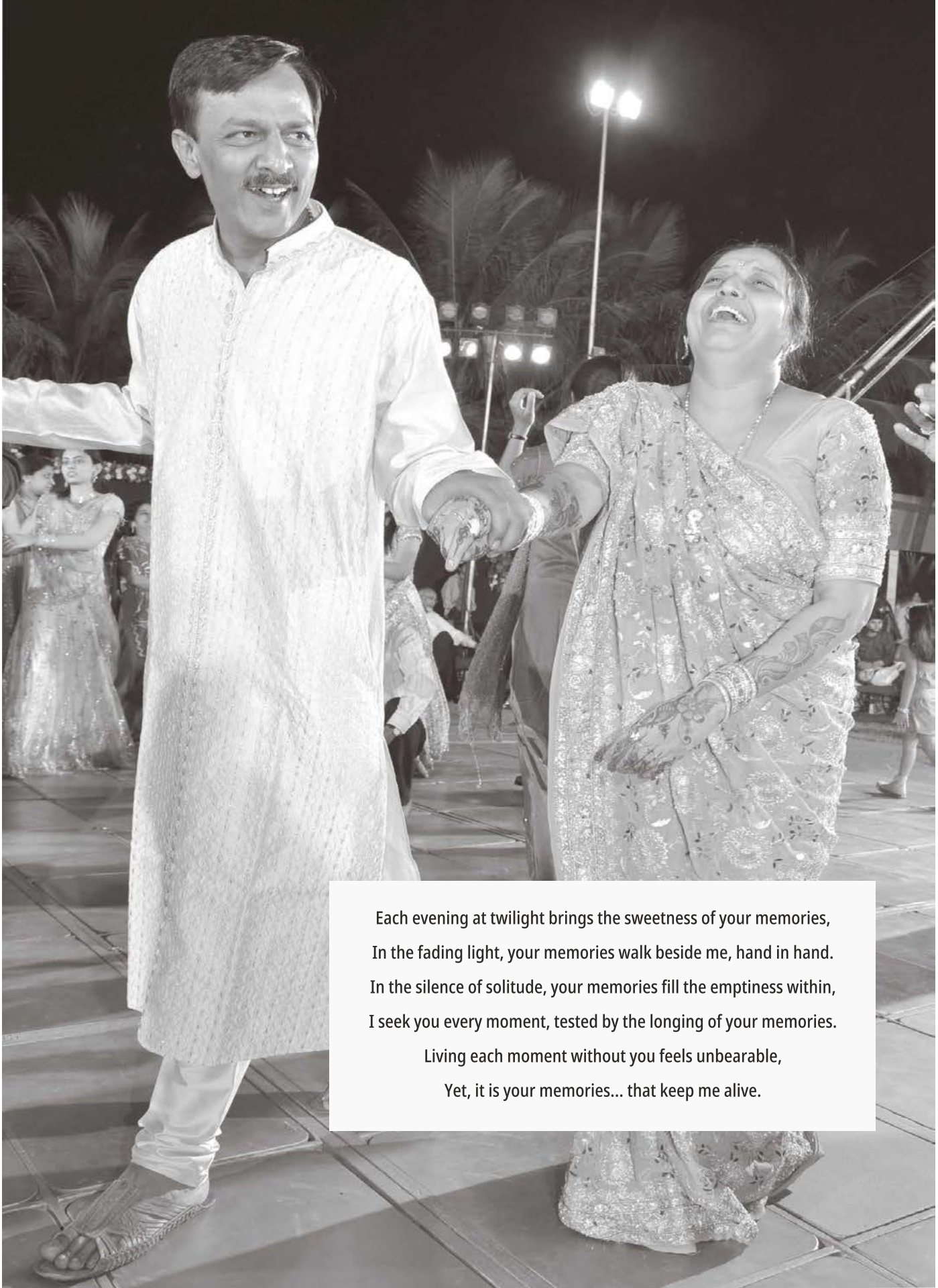
The shock of this is unbearable for me. What will happen when everyone at Shrutina finds out? Can they bear it?

Jeev
Rita Doshi

including the Doshi family, constantly immersed in the presence of Rita's aura. The side effect of this was that, for the past month, I have been dreaming constantly of Rita, Rajoo, and the Doshi family. If this is a sign of some mental illness, I am ready to accept it!

"The happiness of departure is felt more when people stop you from leaving, not when they push you to go." This was a statement from a heartfelt journalist friend who once advocated voluntary retirement. Rita experienced something similar. She was younger than the writer of this book, and there was no serious illness or health issue. She went for a walk with her friends, and on her last day, she told her daughter Karishma on the phone, "Today, I haven't felt any pain at all!"

I met Rajoo several times at his hospital during the writing of this book. After our discussions, we were often the last two to leave the hospital. On those occasions, as I saw him walking alone toward 'Shrutina,' it seemed as if his body was limping under the heavy burden he carried—the pain of Rita's loss, the emptiness in his life, and the crushing loneliness that came with losing her.



Each evening at twilight brings the sweetness of your memories,
In the fading light, your memories walk beside me, hand in hand.
In the silence of solitude, your memories fill the emptiness within,
I seek you every moment, tested by the longing of your memories.

Living each moment without you feels unbearable,
Yet, it is your memories... that keep me alive.

God has tested me through your physical absence,
Yet it is said, and it is true,
Whatever the Lord of this world bestows upon you, endure it.
Whatever is dear to the beloved, cherish it as a treasure.
What God deemed right has come to pass, O Jiva.
The divine purpose behind our separation must be good.
Your presence is needed more in God's court than in Doshi's family.
I surrender to the will of God,
Accepting this truth with grace,
I will continue to cherish the memories of my Jeev,
And strive to fulfill the dreams left unfulfilled of my Jeev.



When we first heard about Pappa's plans to write the book Jeev, we couldn't fathom revisiting the same sorrowful memories we thought it would demand. However, upon reading the preliminary draft, we realized the book wasn't fixated on grief. Instead, it was a heartfelt effort to celebrate our mother's exuberance, her values-driven and selfless life, and her embodiment of Nari tu Narayani (woman as divine). It painted her as a guiding light—a siddha (one enlightened) thriving within the mundane—proving that spiritual grace can blossom in everyday acts of love, sacrifice, and quiet strength.

The journey of compiling this book—through meetings, interviews, and writing—was undertaken with heavy hearts. Over countless days, as we gathered heartfelt stories about Mum from family, relatives, and friends, waves of emotion washed over us all. The tears we shed were unlike any we'd known before, each one a raw testament to the collective love we shared and the void her absence has left behind.

The opening chapters of Jeev masterfully immortalize the cherished moments Mum shared with her family, weaving warmth and intimacy into every memory. In contrast, the closing pages tenderly trace the final journey of Mum—a farewell interwoven with the presence of childhood companions of parents, who's enduring bonds reflect a lifetime of shared roots and unspoken love.

Khushboo - Shwetang - Ayaan, Utsav - Konkana - Durjoy, Pallav - Chandni - Yohan,
Kruti - Chintan - Naera, Karishma - Ankit, Utkarsh - Urvashi - Jeevika, Prerit - Jinal - Kavir,
Pulkit, Unnati - Deep, Tanmay

